

***Conceptions of the West in International  
Relations Thought: From Oswald Spengler to  
Edward Said***

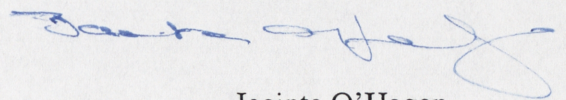
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This thesis is my own original work

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jacinta O'Hagan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jacinta O'Hagan



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## *Abstract*

The West plays a pivotal role in many commentaries and discussions of world politics, yet International Relations theory provides little assistance in thinking conceptually about what the West is. This study seeks to broaden our understanding of international relations through reflecting on various conceptions of the West in writings on world politics. It argues that the West is not monolithic or homogeneous; its conceptualisation varies in different contexts. The dissertation examines conceptions represented in the work of a range of scholars drawn from different periods of the twentieth century and a variety of schools of thought. These illustrate a range of important perspectives on what critical qualities constitute the West, and of the role of the West in world politics. The scholars examined are Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington and Edward Said. Comparison of these conceptions produces interesting contrasts and parallels which suggest that conceptions of the West are not simply shaped by the influence of the era in which they are framed, but are also significantly shaped by the intellectual and normative concerns of the particular author. These conceptions demonstrate the degree to which images of the West are constituted by norms and values as much as by objective boundaries such as territory or race.

Conceptions of the West are not formed in isolation, but in the context of assumptions about the composition and nature of interaction between different civilisational identities in world politics, defined here as 'the cultural world order'. The study finds significant variations amongst the scholars examined regarding perceptions of the cultural world order and of the role of the West within it. Their conceptions of the West reflect important assumptions with regard to whether civilisational identities are plural or converging towards a universal civilisation.

The dissertation suggests that International Relations theory can be enriched by reflection on how our understanding of world politics is framed by assumptions about the way in which we conceive of the West and its role in relation to other civilisational identities. These assumptions help to shape an image of the world and frame perceptions of what is feasible and desirable in interaction with other peoples. The way in which the West and non-West are conceptualised influences, shapes and legitimises the attitudes and actions adopted or prescribed for the interaction between peoples. Different conceptions produce different prescriptions and can induce or legitimise diverse, even contrary forms of interaction between the peoples of the West and non-West.



## *Introduction*

### *The West and Cultural World Order*

Amongst the debates stimulated by the conclusion of the Cold War, two of the most dramatic focus on the contrasting visions of world order presented by Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' and Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' theses. Huntington's 1993 essay<sup>1</sup> has become one of the most widely discussed articles of contemporary International Relations.<sup>2</sup> His analysis of the post-Cold War world is radical and shocking, suggesting an era in which world politics is dominated by conflicts between civilisations. His thesis contains dire warnings to the West that it must consolidate to meet the threats of disintegration from within and attack from without. Conversely, Fukuyama's image of world politics is one of a world divided between societies still evolving through the processes of history, and those which have successfully evolved to a post-historical state. In this context, the West is viewed as at the forefront of a broad civilising process, providing the model of the rational state towards which the rest of humanity is evolving.

The West plays a pivotal role in both these images of world order, yet, intriguingly, International Relations theory provides little assistance in thinking conceptually about what or who the West is. International Relations primarily theorises the world as one of states. The paradigms of the discipline provide no explicit category into which civilisations as actors in world politics can be placed. Consequently, civilisations have been largely absent as actors from International Relations theory. For instance, although Huntington's essay tapped into a broader discussion about the future of the West,<sup>3</sup> there was no contemporary debate on civilisational

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis in Huntington's original 1993 essay in *Foreign Affairs* was elaborated upon most fully in his 1996 book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'International Relations' in capitals will be used in this thesis to refer to the academic discipline, whereas the term 'international relations' in lower case will be used to refer more generally to the realm of world politics.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Fukuyama(1989), Mahbubani(1992) and Deudney & Ikenberry(1993/4) and their respondents, and more recently Coker(1998), Gress(1997) and McNeill(1997a) .

interaction in International Relations scholarship to which it could contribute. This dissertation is one contribution towards remedying this absence.

### *The Objectives of the Study*

This study seeks to broaden our understanding of international relations through reflecting on conceptions of the West in writings on world politics. At one level, its objective is to consider in more depth how the West is conceptualised through exploring how it is described in different contexts and under different influences. It identifies both continuities and variations in these conceptions in order to enhance our awareness of the complexity of representations of the West, and to suggest that these relate to the complexity of the community itself. It assumes that ideas and perceptions matter in International Relations, contending that how a community is perceived and represented is important since this shapes and influences analysis and prescriptions. The study is also based on the belief that political identities are not innate or given, but shaped and reshaped on an ongoing basis by the context in which they operate, as well as by interpretations of histories and traditions. They are embedded in social and cultural contexts and constituted by relationships and interaction. In asking how the political identity of 'the West' is conceptualised, shaped and reshaped under different conditions, the study does not try to identify one, authoritative definition of the West. Nor is it an effort to disprove the existence of the West. Instead, it seeks to use these conceptions to explore the West's complexity and dynamism.

At a second level, the dissertation explores conceptions of the West in relation to broader assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order. The dissertation suggests that the way in which the West, a pivotal actor and influence in modern international relations, is conceptualised provides insights into different possibilities for interaction, and different assumptions about the possibilities for world order. Through this, the dissertation seeks to contribute to a broader debate about how conceptions of cultural identities and cultural world order contribute to perceptions of, and prescriptions for, world politics. While it seeks to avoid overstating their significance, the project investigates perceptions of cultural



identity as an important, if at times implicit, element which frames important debates in world politics.

### ***Cultural World Order***

The concept of 'cultural world order' is introduced to examine assumptions about interaction between broad cultural identities, the most significant of which are referred to as civilisational identities, at the global level. It refers to assumptions about the nature of interaction between civilisational identities in world politics. Cultural world order is distinguished from the concept of the political world order, taken as relating to the interaction of political communities; and of economic world order, taken here to concern the structure of relations of production and exchange.

The political, the economic and the cultural cannot ultimately be treated as totally separate; they are deeply interwoven and interactive dimensions of any society. Assumptions about the cultural world order frame perceptions of interaction and the possibility for progress and change in relations between peoples, and are deeply connected to perceptions of the political and economic world orders. Although this dissertation does not argue that assumptions about culture are the sole determinant of the political and economic world order, perceptions of the political world order can be influenced by assumptions about whether interaction between peoples from different civilisational identities are likely to be characterised by conflict and war or by cooperation and peace. Perceptions of both the economic and political world orders may be influenced by presumptions about the potential for, and impact of, the transfer of ideas and institutions between civilisations. For some, such processes promises convergence and interdependence; for others, domination or imperialism. Therefore, analysis of assumptions about civilisational interaction can deepen our understanding of the perceived possibilities for interaction in all realms of world politics.

Assumptions about the cultural world order vary widely and are influenced by perceptions of civilisation. Two key strands can be identified in the etymology of 'civilisation'. The first is a singular sense which implies a universal process of development towards a higher form of society. This strand can be seen as evolving in tandem with the evolutionary and progressive ideals of the French Revolution.

The second is a pluralist sense which refers to diverse cultural communities. The evolution of this strand can be seen in association with the elements of the Romantic tradition in Western thought which emphasise the plurality and diversity of cultures.<sup>4</sup> Increased awareness of the diversity of human culture enhanced the pluralist concept of civilisation, but this awareness has not necessarily produced a broad acceptance of the equality of civilisations, leading to the perception by some of a hierarchy of civilisations. Furthermore, it has continued to co-exist with the concept of civilisation as progress towards a superior form of society. In nineteenth century Europe, it was widely assumed that Western civilisation was at the forefront of this process.<sup>5</sup> In the twentieth century, both the singular and pluralist sense of civilisation persist in the vocabulary of politics.

The way in which the term civilisation is employed is significant in what it says about the cultural world order as conceived by the particular author. This can be a world order defined by a sense of the unity of humanity flowing in a single developmental process, or an order which encompasses essentially separate communities pursuing their own distinctive history. It may also shape perceptions of interaction between human communities. These may be conceived as relations of conflict, of domination, or cooperation and exchange. The pattern of civilisational history has also been variously conceived. It has been perceived as occurring in cycles, in waves, and in a linear pattern of teleological development. Conceptions of the West occur within these differing perceptions of the pattern of civilisational histories. These perceptions shape expectations and interpretations of interaction between cultures as following trends of integration or incommensurability. These assumptions are important in framing perceptions of the possibilities for interactions between different peoples. They may also be significant in framing the analysis of the role of a major civilisational identity such as the West in the cultural, political and economic world.

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<sup>4</sup> See Walker(1984a) for a discussion of universalist and pluralist dialectic in discussions of culture and world politics.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix for a fuller discussion of the evolution of the term 'civilisation'.

Andrew Linklater has noted that a recurrent theme in Western moral and political thought is the tension between particularism and universalism. In the context of International Relations, this is represented in the question of whether there is or could be a universal human community or a plurality of communities (Walker, 1988; Linklater, 1990; Rengger, 1992). This study does not seek to promote either side of this debate. However, it suggests that underlying assumptions about cultural plurality or universality are implicit in how images of self and other are constructed in International Relations. These assumptions influence readings of the past, analysis of the present and prescriptions about the future. They are critically linked to conceptions of civilisational identity, such as the West, of cultural world order and of the possibilities in interaction.

This study is not a history of the West, although it does consider the way in which the history of the West has been perceived. Nor does it pretend to establish a new grand theory, or paradigm within International Relations. Instead, it suggests that existing paradigms would benefit from more consciously reflecting on the way in which political communities are conceptualised, and on the role of culture and history in shaping perceptions of communities and their interaction.

### ***The West: The Power of the Word***

As a central actor in world politics, and a civilisational entity, the West is a critical element of any cultural or political world order. Furthermore, given the extent of its intellectual and political influence, 'the West' is a critical force which is not only shaped by, but also helps to shape, perceptions of cultural world order. Therefore, how it is conceptualised, and how its role in that cultural world order is perceived can tell us much about broader assumptions relating to that cultural world order.

The status of the West as a powerful entity in world politics is indisputable; its power is in part demonstrated by the prevalence of the term. *The Oxford English Dictionary* devotes no less than three pages to its definition, and another four to associated terms. It begins by defining the West as a location or direction - the place where the sun sets. Its definitions then encompass the West as jurisdiction - the Western part of the Roman Empire subsequent to 395 A.D.; a religious community - the Latin Roman Church in contrast to the Eastern Orthodox church;

a cultural and racial community defined in antithesis to Asia or the Orient, perhaps its most common usage; and, more recently, as an ideological community, denoting the non-communist states of Europe and North America in the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> William Safire(1993) similarly provides a variety of definitions which encompass the West as a geographical locus for the origin of ideas, outlooks and institutions; a political community defined by its democratic and liberal values in contrast to communist societies, but also to monarchical and fundamentalist societies; and as the affluent, industrialised societies of the world whose economies are based on free enterprise.

This range of definitions indicates the complexity of the West. This complexity is enhanced when we consider that for each of the criteria cited by Safire, at least one or two exceptions can be suggested. For instance, Japan geographically and culturally falls outside the West. However, it is frequently included in conceptions of the West in the economic and political contexts.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, the West is often characterised by the democratic nature of its societies. However, Western societies only really became democratic in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting how recent a phenomenon democracy is. Western governance did not always mean democratic government. Whilst developing democratic structures at home, many European states exercised imperial practices in their colonies until the mid twentieth century.

The term 'the West' peppers the language of commentary and scholarship in world politics. It appears in an abundance of books and articles, such as *The Decline of the West* (Spengler, 1928), *Islam and the West* (Lewis, 1993), 'The West and the Rest' (Mahbubani, 1992) and *Twilight of the West* (Coker, 1998). The West, meaning the antithesis to the communist East, was central to the language of Cold War politics. It remains central to the language of post-Cold War politics,

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<sup>6</sup> There is one further sense in which the West appears in the O.E.D definitions, the 'wild West' as in the United States. Interestingly, used in this sense, the West is represented as a territory lacking in order and civilisation. Note also Springborg's observation that in Arabic, the term the West - *Gharb* - also connotes darkness, the incomprehensible, a frightening place (Springborg, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Deudney & Ikenberry's definition of the West which includes Western Europe, North America and Japan in a community based on shared liberal political and economic, institutions, structure and norms (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1993/4).

illustrated by references such as those to the West's role in the Balkans or the West's position on the environment or human rights; the extension of NATO in 1997 was discussed as bringing former Eastern bloc states under 'the protection' of the West. The West is often invoked in antithesis to a similarly broadly constituted other - the East, the Orient, Islam, Asia. It has been used to call upon a loyalty which goes beyond local priorities. Its 'membership' appears fluid and capable of contextual redefinition. It is perhaps from this fluidity or plasticity that the idea of the West derives its power and continued currency, allowing it to flow across, and co-exist with, existing local and regional communities and identities. However, its power also derives from the sheer scale of Western influence in world politics.

### *The Impact of the West*

The impact of the West on the modern world has been unprecedented in its scope and extent. We can divide the influence of the West on modern international relations into three key elements: the West as actor; the West as institutional model; and the West as an intellectual foundation. As actor, the West, or perhaps more accurately Western powers, have been a dominant force in modern world politics. As Mann notes, the nineteenth century West, although a multi-power civilisation, was the undisputed global hegemon (Mann, 1993:vol.2, 262-4). European expansion from the sixteenth century onward meant that Western powers became involved economically, militarily and politically in Asia, Africa and the Americas; the affairs of Europe coming to influence and dominate those of other continents. Fieldhouse estimates that by 1800, Europeans controlled 35 per cent of the world's landed surface; by 1878, 67 per cent; and by 1914, 84 per cent (Fieldhouse, 1984:3).<sup>8</sup> Mann estimates that by 1913, Western powers contributed to nine-tenths of global industrial production.<sup>9</sup> Even when the West's direct control of other societies was reduced through decolonisation, it maintained

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<sup>8</sup> This percentage rose even further after World War I with the establishment of French and British mandates in the Middle East (Gordon, 1989:3).

<sup>9</sup> Mann bases his estimate on statistics compiled by Paul Bairoch. He qualifies this estimate by acknowledging that this figure may underestimate the production of subsistence economies in which surplus may be consumed before marketed or measured. However, as he notes, despite this qualification, the economic power of the West remained overwhelming (Mann, 1993:vol.2, 261).

predominance in the world's systems of production, trade and finance. This meant that the newly emerging societies continued to operate within the context of extensive Western power. During the Cold War, the former imperial powers were split by the ideological bi-polarisation which created the Western and Eastern blocs. While this produced tremendous rivalry for global influence in the political, military and economic field, it did not undermine the dominance of these powers in the international system. Only in recent decades has the West felt the pressure of serious economic competition, emanating from the industrialising economies of East Asia. The military, economic and political capacity of the West has therefore been a dominant feature of modern world politics.

Furthermore, through its expansion, the West transmitted ideas and institutions generated in a European context, but which came to provide the framework of 'international society' (Wight, 1966a; Bull & Watson, 1984). This is a further mechanism through which the influence of the West continued even after the dismantling of the colonial empires. The framework of the twentieth century international system rests upon foundations derived from Western models; the sovereign territorial state, the network of diplomacy, the procedures of international law (Bull & Watson, 1984:2). In addition, many of the major economic and political institutions of the twentieth century - the League of Nations, the UN, the GATT and WTO, and the International Monetary Fund - were modelled around Western political and economic principles, and Western interests.

Concepts now widely utilised in international parlance, such as democracy and capitalism, also have their foundations in the West. For a long time, 'modernisation' and 'development' were taken as synonymous with Westernisation. Although modernisation theory has since been subject to criticism and review, in many parts of the developing world modernisation and Westernisation are still assumed to be the same thing (Gordon, 1989:48-51). Concepts such as 'modernisation' and 'development' have been the vehicles for the internationalisation of the principles of the European Enlightenment, such as rationality and progress.

Moreover, the way in which the academic discipline of International Relations describes and analyses world politics derives largely from Western historical

experience and intellectual traditions. As Stanley Hoffmann(1977) points out, the discipline emerged out of British and American scholarship, dominated in the post-World War II period by American scholars reflecting American concerns. The intellectual tradition from which International Relations draws its main theoretical models are Western school of thought. The 'classic' texts of the discipline are drawn from Greek, European and American scholars such as Thucydides, Macchiavelli, Carr, and Waltz. The historical memory of the discipline is almost exclusively that of the evolution of the Western states-system. As Walker(1993:31) notes, the origins of International Relations' traditions are drawn from the Greek city states, the Italian Renaissance or the European states-system of the eighteenth century. The models of behaviour upon which theory is based are drawn primarily from the history of European, then American, engagements in international politics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The problems investigated stem from the experiences of the 'great powers'. Although other societies are viewed as implicated in these politics, the system is presumed to rotate around the dynamics and concerns emanating from the European core.

### ***International Relations Theory and the West***

The West, then, is a central actor in, and shaper of, world politics. Yet when we turn to International Relations theory to help us understand the nature of this significant community, we discover that it provides us with little assistance. The main paradigms of the discipline provide no category within which to analyse this entity. Whilst the West is often referred to in discussions of international history or in commentaries on world politics, International Relations scholars rarely interrogate the nature of the West as a complex community.

This absence is in part attributable to the conditions in which the discipline evolved. Although early twentieth century thinkers demonstrated an interest in the role of civilisations in world politics, this interest effectively lapsed in International Relations studies until recently.<sup>10</sup> The environment of post-World War II

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<sup>10</sup> This included the work of scholars such as Arnold Toynbee, Oswald Spengler, Pitrim Sorokin and later by Martin Wight. Historians such as Adda Bozeman and William McNeill also demonstrated an interest in the role of civilisations in world politics. More recently, interest has



International Relations was not conducive to the consideration of broad cultural communities. The period saw the discipline focus on the state as the primary political community, and on the structure and system of power politics. The discipline sought to establish itself as objective and scientific. In part this was in reaction to the seemingly discredited 'idealism' of the pre-war liberal era. Students of international politics were encouraged to study the facts of power rather than to be 'misled' by consideration of motives, ideas or morals (Morgenthau, 1964). Normative issues, relating to how political communities perceived themselves or their interests, were believed to be of little relevance to the forces within the system that drove power politics, these being the pursuit of interests within the system, defined primarily as power (Morgenthau, 1964) or security (Waltz, 1979). Although the discipline's focus on the unitary state was challenged by the arguments of behaviouralists, pluralists and structuralists (Banks, 1984;1985; Smith, 1995), attention has largely remained fixed on this entity as the most significant actor in international relations.

In the post-Cold War era however, International Relations has been subject to rethinking and review in response to the transformation, or indeed turbulence, of contemporary world politics (Rosenau, 1990; Lapid, 1996:4). The shape of the international system has been radically altered by the collapse of bi-polarity. The states-system itself is being subjected to a variety of centrifugal and centripetal pressures, witnessing both the fragmentation and the convergence of states as a result of the pressures of technological, political, economic and social change.<sup>11</sup>

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been demonstrated in the work of Huntington (1993a; 1996a) and the responses which this provoked, for instance Alker(1995) and Puchala(1997). See also Chakrabarti Pasic(1996) in which the author adopts a cultural approach to theory which also involves reintroducing the concept of civilisation.

<sup>11</sup> The integrity and sovereign authority of some states appears challenged by pressures such as those stemming from globalisation. Other states have been subject to forces of fragmentation, with new ethnic, national and racial identities seeking their own distinct political communities in the wake of political and economic dislocations which accompanied the end of the Cold War, and in particular, the collapse of the Eastern bloc alliance. Still other states, such as some of the post-colonial states of West Africa, appear to be collapsing under the weight of social, economic and political pressures (Kaplan, 1997). Ferguson & Mansbach note that this is not a unique feature of modern world politics. Instead they note that this 'tale of two tendencies' characterised historical change: 'the elaboration of larger networks of interaction and interdependence, alongside the fragmentation of other collectivities into vulnerable and tiny units of self-identification' (1996:34). See, for instance, Camilleri & Falk(1992) and Ferguson & Mansbach(1996) for a discussion of the

These changes are forcing International Relations scholars to reconsider their perceptions of political communities in world politics in order to understand, let alone explain or predict, events and trends. These events have encouraged a more explicit interest in forces which shape political communities, their interests and their interactions.

Over the last decade or so, the discipline has experienced a growth in new, critical voices. Lapid notes it has been subjected to a 'burst of critical scrutiny' which, whilst not totally undermining the dominant paradigms, has 'instituted greater intellectual and sociological flexibility in IR scholarship' (Lapid, 1996:4, Cox & Sjolander, 1994). The growth of alternative perspectives under the rubric of critical social theory, including post-modernism, feminism and more recently constructivism, has generated discussion of more explicitly normative concerns. Scholars have been encouraged to question the assumptions and the epistemology of more orthodox International Relations perspectives, in order to unveil their normative and cultural underpinnings, and to suggest the existence of alternative possibilities for world politics.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Theoretical Influences***

In seeking to broaden our understanding of world politics through reflecting on conceptions of the West, the dissertation suggests that the West can be usefully conceived of as a civilisational identity.<sup>13</sup> In order to bring consideration of civilisations into International Relations, it is necessary to consider expanding concepts of political community. This study questions at the outset whether

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changes occurring in the Westphalian system with, for instance, the evolution of European interdependence in institutions such as the European Union.

<sup>12</sup> Ashley & Walker(1990). Lapid notes the preoccupation of orthodox International Relations with considering invariance rather than flux in the nature of the international system (Lapid, 1996:6). Kratochwil is similarly critical of the lack of reference in International Relations, and particularly in neo-realism, to the precise way in which change occurs (1993:63-4; 1996:214). Scholars such as Cox(1981; 1987), Linklater(1996) and Ruggie(1993) have also demonstrated an interest in processes of change.

<sup>13</sup> By civilisational identity, I mean a form of identity which involves an awareness of the location of the immediate ethnic or national community within the context of a transnational cultural community, broad in geographical and temporal scope. Societies within these communities may share certain traditions, beliefs, values and histories which may influence perceptions of world order.

International Relations as represented by the dominant paradigms can fruitfully reflect upon the complexity of communities and forms of interactions which world politics contains. It seeks to look beyond the widely accepted parameters which dominate International Relations thought, which consider international relations as primarily concerning the interaction of states, to discuss broader conceptualisations of community and interaction in world politics. In this process, the study draws on theorists such as Robert Cox(1981) and Andrew Linklater(1990; 1992; 1995) to suggest that the concept of political community in International Relations can be usefully expanded.

One of the factors which has perhaps militated against the treatment of civilisations as significant actors in world politics is their somewhat intangible nature. The frontiers between civilisations are broad and murky. In contrast, sovereign states appear to provide a more concrete representation of community, with their territorial frontiers and institutions encased in solid buildings. However, as Benedict Anderson(1991) points out, the nation-state owes its identity and cohesion as much to intangible, intersubjective factors as to the more tangible manifestations of community. As he argues, community is as much an 'imagined' as a tangible entity. His work on the constitution of national communities provides important theoretical insights into the constituting of broadly based and dispersed political communities. Anderson's work on 'imagined communities' can be usefully applied to civilisational entities such as the West to assist in understanding their substance and importance in world politics. The West is an imagined community in the sense that it is a broad transnational association, which extends over a broad geographical and temporal canvass. It encompasses peoples who may have no immediate contact with one another, but who perceive themselves to be part of the West. There is, therefore, a shared identity and some element of common interests, ideas and values. It is taken to represent certain traditions, handed down in the course of the long history of the West.

This study effectively treats the West as an intersubjective or socially constituted community. It shares with constructivists<sup>14</sup> an interest in the importance of the normative dimensions of community, the social constitution of communities, and the way in which identities shape perceptions of interests and action in world politics (Reus-Smit, 1996; Klotz, 1995; Wendt, 1992). The work of constructivists to date, however, has largely focused on the constitution of state identities. This study delves a little deeper into the social and cultural context of world politics in looking at civilisational identities.

Treating the West as a civilisational identity and an imagined community encourages drawing on literature on culture and the politics of identity in international relations. As Walker notes, although a number of works have drawn attention to the significance of culture as a force shaping world politics, it has not been substantively treated by the majority of International Relations theorists as a subject 'of significance or urgency' (Walker, 1990:8).<sup>15</sup>

Discussion of the role of culture has become more prominent with the rise of critical perspectives in International Relations. This includes the work of authors of the World Order Models Project who reflect on the cultural underpinnings of International Relations and the prominence of Western culture in shaping the discipline.<sup>16</sup> More recently, collections such as the *Millenium* Special issue of *Culture*(1993) and that edited by Lapid & Kratochwil(1996) explore the impact of reintroducing culture into International Relations, noting its relevance to both

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<sup>14</sup> This rubric, as always, covers a wide range of scholars. It is most immediately associated with the work of Alexander Wendt. However, many scholars who consider themselves constructivists do not share Wendt's focus on systemic theory. Reus-Smit distinguishes between 'systemic constructivists', such as Wendt; unit-level theorists, such as Katzenstein who focus on how domestic politics shape interests and identities; and 'holistic' constructivists who adopt a broader perspective which encompasses both domestic and international phenomena in analysing systems, focusing on change either within existing systems as in the work of Kratochwil, or across systems, as in the work of Ruggie (Reus-Smit, 1996). This genre also encompasses scholars who would describe themselves as modernist, and those such as Richard Price, who pursue a post-modern approach in their work.

<sup>15</sup> See also Falk(1990), and Darby & Paolini(1994) on the absence of culture from International Relations. See Rengger(1992) for a discussion of some of reasons behind the resistance of International Relations theory to treating culture as a substantive issue. For illustrations of authors within the field who did regard culture as a significant element of International Relations, see works by Toynbee, Bozeman, Wight and Bull.

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Walker(1984b), Mazrui(1990), Chay(1990), Falk(1994a).

theory and practice. As Cox(1981) observes, all theory is founded on a particular perspective; the recent work on the role of culture in International Relations further highlights the argument that all theories of International Relations are founded in particular social and cultural contexts (Bleiker, 1993; Chan, 1993).

Literature on the politics of identity and representation can also make an important contribution to this investigation, raising questions about how communities are constituted and circumscribed. Identity politics play a critical role in both defining the boundaries of any community, and in providing the community with an inner sense of cohesion (Norton, 1988; Dittmer & Kim, 1993; Campbell, 1992; Connolly, 1991; Inayatullah & Blaney, 1996). Discussion of the processes of differentiation, of inclusion and exclusion, have been important to our understanding of how communities define and represent themselves and others (Linklater, 1990; 1992; Connolly, 1991; Inayatullah & Blaney, 1996). This in turn influences the forms of interaction which are anticipated and legitimated. Works by authors such as V.G. Kiernan(1969) Edward Said(1978) and Tvetzan Todorov(1984) explore how the West's self-image evolved through representations of others in colonial and imperial encounters. Analysis of the way in which the West represented non-Western peoples, and the power which it exercised through such representations has become an important facet of post-colonial studies. Elsewhere, authors such as Bradley Klein(1990), David Campbell(1992; 1996) and Simon Dalby(1990) have investigated how the non-West has been represented in the context of Cold War politics. The politics of representation that these works highlight is important to this study which focuses on how the West is conceptualised and represented.

The significance of perceptions and representations has been acknowledged within International Relations in fields such as foreign policy analysis. However, it has been most prominent in the literature produced by critical theorists and, in particular, post-modern scholars.<sup>17</sup> Drawing on theories of discourse, language and signification, these scholars argue that representations and discourse do not just

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<sup>17</sup> See Doty(1996) on the absence of questions about representation from academic studies of International Relations. As Doty notes, the work of authors such as Shapiro, Der Derian, Walker and Ashley have demonstrated, and stimulated interest in, this aspect of International Relations.

reflect, but constitute the social world. They challenge the faith of what they characterise as 'modern culture' in uncontested, coherent representations of communities and identities as homogeneous, fixed and authentic. They stress that power and received assumptions order perceptions and representations of reality (Ashley & Walker, 1990; Der Derian, 1989; Shapiro, 1989). This study does not engage in many of the deeper debates stemming from post-modern perspectives. However, it does draw on insights from some of these debates. In particular, it is influenced by the contention that conceptualisation and representation are meaningful and important dimensions of world politics. It also contends that the representations of a community are not always consistent, but can demonstrate great diversity. Communities and their representations are therefore often complex.

The study demonstrates points of commonality and difference that coexist across a range of conceptions. However, as noted above, it does not seek to produce or sanction *the* definitive conception of the West. This raises questions regarding how we can understand the co-existence of complex and multiple images of the West without seeking to authorise any one of these. This study suggests that the answer to this problem lies in recognising the influence of context on the various conceptions. One of the features of the recent work on culture and identity has been to highlight the dynamic and fragmented or pluralist nature of these forces (Lapid, 1996; Dittmer & Kim, 1993; Campbell, 1992; Lawson, 1996; 1997). For instance, Campbell(1992) argues that the identity of the state is not fixed, but constantly in the process of constitution and reconstitution; Bloom(1990) argues that, to retain their attractiveness, identities must evolve to maintain their relevance to changing circumstances. Therefore, to understand the co-existence of a variety of concepts of the West, it is useful to keep in mind the contexts in which they were formed, and the perspectives from which they evolve (Cox, 1981); no author is totally independent of the context in which they write (Said, 1978). This study, therefore, will seek to locate the conceptions of the West in the context of their historical environment, intellectual influence and broader perceptions of the cultural world order.

## *Methodology*

Drawing on the above influences, the dissertation assumes this community to be a social construction and examines factors such as the historical and intellectual environment, which shape interpretations of it. This dissertation approaches the West as a series of representations, investigating how it is conceptualised in the work of seven twentieth century thinkers. They are not all International Relations scholars, but all were significant in articulating and shaping contemporary thought on the role and future of the West in world politics. All made major and often radical contributions to contemporary debates on the political world order based upon important and distinctive assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order. This study examines their conceptions of the West within the context of their assumptions about cultural world order. It applies to each a framework of analysis which uncovers points of commonality and difference in these conceptions, and explores factors which influence this diversity.

All are authors writing in the twentieth century, the period in which International Relations developed as a the discipline; but from different periods of the century. In looking at conceptions drawn from different parts of this century, the study examines how the historical context frames perceptions of civilisational identity. In examining the West from a historical perspective, this study aims to escape one of the pitfalls that International Relations is often accused of falling into, that is the neglect or misuse of history.<sup>18</sup> However, the study also compares perspectives drawn from similar periods, highlighting the influence of other factors, such as the intellectual environment, on these conceptions.

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<sup>18</sup> History is often used in International Relations in a selective or deterministic manner to illustrate certain strands of theory rather than as a means with which to explore theory. Neo-realist theorists in particular, such as Waltz, have been criticised for adopting an ahistorical approach to International Relations in their quest to establish universally applicable models and laws (Ashley, 1984; Kratochwil, 1996). Cox describes neo-realism as using history as a quarry providing materials with which to illustrate recurring themes (1981:131). There is often a failure to recognise or explore the historical context in which significant texts or institutions have been produced (Walker, 1989). This study employs a historical perspective as a means of exploring the ways in which ideas of community change. In this, the influence of Robert Cox's work is acknowledged. In 'Social Forces, States and World Orders' (1981), Cox stresses the importance of historical context in shaping world orders. His interest is in exploring how contemporary social forces can influence the shape of power and institutions, in particular world orders. My aim is slightly less ambitious: that is to explore the relationship between historical context and the ideas through which the West is conceptualised.



The first two scholars selected, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, illustrate the interest in this early part of the century in civilisational interaction as an important aspect of world politics. Spengler's controversial *The Decline of the West* sold over one hundred thousand copies and provoked debate throughout Europe. Written in wartime Germany, it demonstrates a Romantic pessimism for the future of the late modern West in the context of a broad cyclical view of civilisational history. It expressed a sense of disillusionment, if not doom, which reflected an important aspect of that era. Arnold Toynbee, also writing in the first half of the twentieth century, shared Spengler's interest in placing the West in the broader context of civilisational history. He was one of the most prolific and widely respected scholars of international relations of his generation. In a series of studies which captured the imagination of scholars and the public at the onset of the Cold War, his work presents a critical analysis of the modern West.

Martin Wight and Hedley Bull are discussed together as foundational authors of the influential International Society or 'English school' of International Relations. In contrast to many of their contemporaries, their work encompassed an awareness of the relevance of civilisational interaction to international relations in the context of the evolution of international society. Although the majority of their work was produced during the Cold War era, they provide an analysis of international relations which, whilst encompassing the dynamics and structures of the Cold War, exceeds that immediate environment.

The final set of scholars examined present three very different representations of the West in the later part of the twentieth century. The works of Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington represent two distinct approaches to thinking through the meaning and implications of the end of the Cold War and the future world order. Fukuyama's 'end of history' essay provoked a storm of debate by heralding the end of the Cold War and the victory of the West. His thesis is studied as an influential example of a liberal, progressive conceptualisation of the future of world politics and the role of the West. In contrast, Samuel Huntington's equally provocative 'clash of civilisations' essay has become one of the most widely discussed essays in modern International Relations, articulating a pessimistic, *realpolitik* perspective of future world order. Edward Said's work focuses not on the Cold War or its

fallout, but on the West as an imperial entity. Said's *Orientalism* is widely regarded as one of the most important works in generating the genre of post-colonial studies. His work provides a radical and critical view of the West and civilisational interaction drawn, in some respects, from outside the West.

The examination of these important thinkers in tandem presents a rich and diverse range of perspectives both on the West, and on the cultural world order which suggest a variety of possibilities for cultural and political interaction.

The method chosen is necessarily limited in that only a small selection of perspectives could be examined. A number of other important and influential scholars could have been included in this study; scholars such as Fernand Braudel, William McNeill or Immanuel Wallerstein to name but a few. However, the study aims to examine a representative rather than a comprehensive selection of conceptions of the West and this selection is sufficient to this task. Those chosen are Western scholars or scholars who have worked in the West, meaning here Europe or the United States.<sup>19</sup> While this limits the dissertation's capacity to reflect on non-Western conceptions of the West, it does demonstrate a rich diversity of conceptions within the West, indicating that even within the community, there is no single or homogenous conception of self.

Discussions relating to the West in world politics in the mid twentieth century often conceive of it primarily in antithesis to the Soviet-led Eastern bloc. This is not the focus of this study. While assumptions which underlie conceptions of the West in the Cold War context are not excluded, this study seeks to place them in a broader context which precedes, succeeds and exceeds the Cold War environment. It examines conceptions of the West which precede the Cold War, in addition to those which discuss the West in the post-Cold War context, and those which discuss the West in relation to societies beyond communist Europe and the Soviet Union.

In Chapter One, the thesis discusses the main paradigms of International Relations, demonstrating that none provides an adequate conceptual framework for analysing

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<sup>19</sup> Though born in Palestine, Edward Said completed his education in the United States and has spent most of his career working in this country.

the West as a complex political community in world politics. It considers this absence, suggesting that it is in part due to the epistemological premises and theoretical aspirations of these paradigms. Chapter Two suggests a framework for the analysis of conceptions of civilisational identities such as the West and their relationships to cultural world order. The chapter discusses how this framework can address the complexity and contingency of the West by drawing on insights from literature on the politics of identity and representation. The framework focuses on the context in which the conceptions were formed and articulated; assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order; the objective and normative boundaries of the West which these conceptions present; and perceptions of cultural interactions within the context of these assumptions about the cultural world order and the community's boundaries.

Chapters Three to Eight apply this framework to each of the authors selected. Chapter Three examines the work of Oswald Spengler. His conception of the West is of a great, but decaying civilisation in a cultural world order comprising separate, self-contained civilisations pursuing independent histories rather than a universal history of human progress. Chapter Four looks at the work of Arnold Toynbee, who also conceptualised the West within a cultural world order comprising separate civilisations experiencing cycles of expansion and retraction. Toynbee's West was the leading civilisation, but one threatened with spiritual and physical decline. Toynbee did not see the West as a universal civilisation, but did perceive it to provide a framework for a global, multicultural society. Chapter Five looks at the work of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull on international society. The concept of the cultural world order found in their work also involves a plurality of civilisations, but one which appears more integrated than Spengler and Toynbee's. Their West is a central, formative influence shaping modern interaction through the structures and institutions of international society. Chapter Six examines the conception of the West which emerges from Francis Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis. In contrast to the preceding authors, Fukuyama's concept of the cultural world order is shaped unambiguously by a belief in teleological human progress. Man is seen as involved in a civilising process with the West at its forefront. Chapter Seven examines the conception of the West found in Samuel Huntington's

'clash of civilisations' thesis. Huntington's cultural world order comprises a plurality of competing and essentially incommensurable civilisations. Furthermore, he argues that cultural identity is becoming the organising principle of the political world order. In this context, he perceives the West to be a powerful civilisation in decline which needs to regroup and consolidate. Chapter Eight examines the work of Edward Said. Said's cultural world order implies a plurality of civilisations, but suggests that this has been dominated by an imperial West in the modern era. His conception of the West entails a representation of representations. Through this, he critiques how the West constructed its identity through its representations of non-Western peoples.

Examination of this range of perspectives illustrates the complexity and contingency of conceptions of the West. Observing these conceptions in relation to assumptions about cultural world order, the study suggests that perceptions of cultural identity help to frame perceptions of interests and options in world politics; but also that perceptions of cultural world order help to frame perceptions of the political world order. In these respects, this study seeks to both contribute to reflection on the nature of the West in International Relations, and to the importance of perceptions of cultural world order in world politics.

## *Chapter One*

### *The West, Civilisations and International Relations Theory*

#### *The Absence of the West from International Relations Theory*

The starting point of this study is an exploration of how the discipline of International Relations has understood and explained the West in relation to world politics. The first task is to identify how the frameworks of analysis the discipline provides relate to a civilisational community such as the West. In his 1959 work, *Man, the State and War*, Kenneth Waltz identifies three levels of analysis for understanding the dynamics of international relations: the individual; the state; and the system of states. This conceptualisation, with minor variations, has been highly influential in the discipline. However, none of these categories accommodate analysis of the West or of civilisations more generally. Furthermore, whilst the West is frequently referred to in discussion of world politics by International Relations scholars and commentators, and is widely assumed to be an important actor and influence in international affairs, its nature and composition remain largely unexamined in International Relations theory. In these respects, the West is absent from International Relations theory.

This chapter examines the absence of thinking about the West at a conceptual level in the main paradigms of International Relations, taken here to be realism, liberalism and, to a slightly lesser extent, Marxism (Holsti, 1985; Smith, 1995:18; Wæver, 1996). It examines key assumptions about the primary units of analysis employed by these paradigms to demonstrate that, whilst useful in analysing aspects of world politics, they are limited in their capacity to examine the role and nature of the West. It considers some of the reasons for the absence of examination of the West in International Relations theory. In part, these are linked to the epistemological premises of International Relations' main paradigms and to their

theoretical aspirations. This chapter suggests, however, that the absence deprives International Relations of important insights into the nature of world order, and that the discipline would benefit from a framework of analysis which could reflect on the importance and nature of civilisational identities in world politics.

### ***Realism, the State and the West***

The state is the central political community employed in the study of world politics. The discipline of International Relations was born from a desire to understand and prevent war between states. Even pluralists and structuralists who regard other units of analysis as important, or as even more fundamental, acknowledge the state as the main institution through which contemporary world politics functions. Realism, the major school of thought which gives primacy to the state as a unit of analysis, assumes that the principal actors in world politics are groups, rather than individuals (Buzan, 1996; Schweller & Priess, 1997); and, for most realists, the state is presumed to be the primary form of political community in modern society (Carr, 1939:124; Bull, 1972a:251). Realists view international relations as the interaction of sovereign territorial states in a situation of anarchy in which states are driven by the pursuit of interests defined by some as power (Morgenthau, 1964:5), by others as security (Waltz, 1979:91; Holsti, 1995).

Whilst realism is not fixed upon the nation-state as a timeless and universal category, it is fixed in its view of the nature of the units in world politics. The units change in form and composition, but retain their essential character, motivation and goals - the drive for power or security. Whether the units examined are tribes, city states or empires, they remain 'self regarding units' (Waltz, 1979:91; Gilpin, 1979:18). Therefore, while the character of the state may change, its basic nature in the realist schema of international politics does not. It remains the key unit of analysis operating under the logic of anarchy in pursuit of its own interest regardless of its cultural character.

Within the realist school, there is a division between thinkers of the 'classical' school, such as Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aron and E.H. Carr, and 'neo-realists', such as Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer and Joseph Grieco. One of the principal features dividing these two tendencies is the focus which neo-realist

thinkers place on the structure of the system (Buzan, 1996).<sup>1</sup> However, neo-realists continue to see states as the key actors in the international system (Buzan, 1996:49).<sup>2</sup> Their systemic focus makes no additional space for consideration of civilisations in international relations.

Realism recognises the potential for associations between states, but this does not open up the possibility of including broader communities, such as civilisation, in its conceptual scheme. In realist thought, states may ally with each other but they always do so on the basis of the pursuit of their own interests. For instance, they may form an alliance to maintain a balance of power in the system. Morgenthau stresses the expediency and functionality of such alliances which will be necessarily temporary and subject to states interests: 'Whether or not a nation will pursue a policy of alliance is, then, a matter not of principle but of expediency' (Morgenthau, 1964:181). Similarly, Waltz's argument suggests alliances are functional and do not presuppose ideological, normative or cultural links:

If pressures are strong enough, a state will ally with almost anyone  
... It is important to notice that states will ally with the devil to avoid  
the hell of military defeat. (Waltz, 1979:166)

If states are self-seeking, self-regarding units, one would expect that associations on the basis of a transnational form of identity such as the civilisational would have little or no relevance. However, assumptions of transnational identities such as the West slip into realist discussions of world politics. Morgenthau, for instance, assumes the West to be an important actor in world politics. In discussing the Cold War bi-polar system, he notes:

The superpower that could add India or a united Germany to its  
allies might well have gained a decisive victory in the struggle  
between East and West. (1964:360)

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<sup>1</sup> For Waltz, neo-realism is characterised by its development of a concept of the structure of the system which allows analysis of how the structure affects the interaction of units and the outcomes they produce (Waltz, 1995:74).

<sup>2</sup> As Buzan(1996) notes, neo-realism started as a response to criticisms of classical realism. Neo-realism responded by reasserting the ascendancy of the state and the importance of great powers, in contrast to pluralist thinkers who promoted the significance of non-state actors in international relations. Waltz uses the term 'unit' in order to achieve a universal theory, with the contemporary system being one of states. The discussion of interaction within the international system in *Theory of International Politics* (Waltz, 1979) is primarily a discussion of interaction between states.



In relation to challenges to colonialism, he argues:

The moral challenge emanating from Asia is in its essence a triumph of the moral ideas of the West. ... In the wake of its conquests, the West brought to Asia not only its technology and political institutions, but also its principles of political morality. (1964:359)

Furthermore, Morgenthau presupposes the West to be a fundamental element of the international system as a whole. For example, he acknowledges that his discussion of the conduct of international politics focuses primarily on Western civilisation, '[t]he civilisation with which we are here of course mainly concerned' (1964:231). He also attaches great importance to the intellectual and moral cohesion of Western civilisation as a critical element of the balance of power:

...the fuel that keeps the motor of the balance of power moving is the intellectual and moral foundation of Western civilisation. (1964:221)

The West is, therefore, important to Morgenthau in being both an instrumental and a moral force. It assumes an importance which does not derive from his theoretical structures of international politics. Morgenthau's references to the West make assumptions about its nature, constitution, and its centrality. Such assumptions are not accounted for in his state-centric model of power politics.

Morgenthau's position is not unusual. It is also evident in the work of other classical realists such as George Kennan. Kennan like Morgenthau views states as the central actors in international relations, but proceeds to further assume important divisions between the communities of West and East; this is demonstrated in the title of his work, *Russia and the West*. Kennan frequently phrases his analysis in terms of the relationship of Russia, or the Soviets, to the West, stressing the need for the 'Western world' to stand firm against the threats emanating from the Soviet Union (Kennan, 1967:vol.1, 250). This is something more than simply relations between self-regarding states pursuing functionally defined national interests. For Kennan, the West is clearly a broader community which encompasses states; there are strong assumptions of normative links between its members. Such communities, however, are not explained or analysed by realist theory.

John Mearsheimer's neo-realist analysis of the implications of the end of the Cold War clearly conceives of the international system as a system of states. At the same time, the concept of the West remains relevant to his understanding of the contemporary world order. The bi-polar Cold War order is based upon an 'East-West' division, with the West comprising democratic states united under American hegemony in the face of the Soviet threat (Mearsheimer, 1990). Therefore, the West continues to be perceived as an actor whose presence helps to define the shape of the Cold War world order, but its presence and role are not clearly accounted for in the neo-realist paradigm. The sense of the West as a significant community for realist authors has been further accentuated by the post-Cold War debate with regard to the future of the West, with authors such as Owen Harries(1993), Conor Cruise O'Brien(1992/3) and Stephen Walt(1994) debating the possible forthcoming division or collapse of the West. These discussions highlight the implicit significance of the West in world politics, but also accentuate the absence of a suitable category of analysis within realism for examining the nature and interaction of civilisational communities.

In the work of Robert Gilpin(1979) we find a greater sense of the West as a civilisational entity. Gilpin is conscious of the West as a civilisation which has become pre-eminent on a global scale for a variety of developmental and organisational reasons, effectively establishing the parameters of the international system. The Western system and the international system consequently become virtually indistinguishable. Yet whilst Gilpin is aware of the West in his work and of the impact it had as a civilisation in shaping world politics, he does not analyse it as a community except to explain its superiority. In part, this is because he does not reflect on how civilisations fit into his structural theory of world politics, with civilisations appearing to be pre-modern communities subsumed under the Western states-system.<sup>3</sup>

Authors in the realist tradition, therefore, incorporate conceptions of the West into their commentary on international relations but not into their theoretical structure.

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<sup>3</sup> Although Gilpin does demonstrate some concern of a possible revolt against the hegemony of Western values resulting in a return to a pre-modern clash of civilisation in world politics (Gilpin, 1979:225).

Furthermore, there is little reflection on the extent to which their theoretical structures are premised on Western historical and intellectual traditions. Realist International Relations scholars acknowledge their intellectual debt to a range of 'classic' texts by European authors. These include Thucydides, Hobbes, Rousseau and Machiavelli and their contemplations on the assumed universal laws of states in conflict. Histories of the evolution of international relations typically focus on the establishment of the modern European state system of secular, sovereign, territorial entities through the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the Concert of Europe, and the operation of the balance of power in nineteenth century Europe. The discipline focuses in more depth on the twentieth century and the politics of World War I, World War II, the Cold War and, more recently, the turmoil of the post-Cold War era. The politics of Europe and US-Soviet relations receives the most detailed analysis. As Walker notes, there is a tendency to neglect the interaction between political communities prior to and outside of the system of territorial, sovereign states (Walker, 1989).<sup>4</sup> The story is essentially very modern and, for the most part, Euro-centric. The paradigm's historical perspective is almost exclusively that of the West and the Western states-system.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, whilst realism aims to present a theory of international relations which is universal in its application, it draws predominantly on Western historical, intellectual and institutional precedents in constructing this theory. The theory it constructs allows little conceptual space for reflection on the role and nature of broad cultural communities such as the West out of which it evolves.

### ***Liberalism, Individualism and the West***

During the rapid growth of International Relations as a discipline since the mid twentieth century, realism has been the dominant theoretical paradigm. As noted

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<sup>4</sup> One obvious exception here is Martin Wight who, in *Systems of States* (1977) considered Chinese and Hellenic states-systems in addition to his analysis of the evolution of the European states-system, on which he primarily focused. Wight's work, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, demonstrates the broader historical focus of the British school of International Relations scholars.

<sup>5</sup> Ferguson & Mansbach (1996:34) note that the state in International Relations has many definitions, but tends to be associated with the Westphalian model of the sovereign territorial entity. However, this model serves as something of an ideal which few actors actually approach.

above, realism focuses its attention on the state as the primary international political community. However, other strands of thought consider a broader range of actors in world politics. The most prominent of these paradigms is often labelled the pluralist or liberal paradigm. Unlike realism, liberalism is not a tradition of thought which developed within the International Relations discipline. It entails the application of ideas which have evolved within the broader stream of political thought and were then applied to the global context. As Stanley Hoffmann notes, the international dimensions of liberalism effectively project domestic liberalism onto world politics (Hoffmann, 1995:160; Richardson, 1995). Like realism, liberalism is a broad, generic title used to describe a wide range of thinkers and positions.<sup>6</sup> Despite this diversity, liberalism can be viewed as ‘an integral outlook’ (Gray, 1995:xiii). These strands of thought share core assumptions defined by Zacher & Matthew as a belief in progress towards greater human freedom through promotion of peace, prosperity and justice; the belief in the realisation of human freedom through greater cooperation; and the belief in transformation of human society via modernisation. At the heart of classical liberal thought are the principles of freedom and progress. The central subject of these processes is the individual:

The metaphysical and ontological core of liberalism is individualism. It is from this premise that the familiar liberal commitments to freedom, tolerance and individual rights are derived. (Arblaster, 1984:15)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as Doyle(1986:1152) is frequently quoted as noting, there is no canonical description of liberalism, and there are several opinions on how various strands of liberal thought should be classified. Zacher & Matthew(1995) identify republican liberalism, commercial, military, cognitive, sociological and institutional liberalism. The latter three of these are particularly associated with developments in liberal thought in the twentieth century. Keohane(1989) discusses republican, commercial and regulatory liberalism. Dunne(1997) suggests liberal international thought can be usefully divided into liberal internationalism, idealism and institutionalism. His concept of neo-idealist liberals include ‘radical liberals’, such as Richard Falk, who lay greater emphasis on the role of social movements than do neo-institutionalists, such as Keohane. This suggests important differences, if not tensions, in the perspectives of liberal schools. The most prominent is perhaps the distinction between ‘negative’ liberalism, which focuses on freedom from constraint or oppression, and ‘positive’ liberalism, which focuses on freedom to achieve emancipation and equality. McKinley & Little(1986) distinguish between ‘pure’ and ‘compensatory’ liberalism; whilst Richardson(1995) identifies within the liberal tradition two contending trends of thought, the liberalism of privilege and the radical perspective which is critical of the privileges conferred on the advantaged.

<sup>7</sup> Arblaster discusses the emergence of the concept of the individual in relation to humanist thought, a central feature being the emergence of the sense of man as separate from the natural world, and of man as self-possessed, capable of exercising free will (Arblaster, 1984:37). Gray(1995:xii) also

Whilst much of contemporary liberal and neo-liberal international thought accepts the importance, if not the primacy, of the state as the most important collective international actor (Keohane & Nye, 1977; 1987; Baldwin, 1993:9), its attitude to the relationship between the citizen and the state differs from that of realism. It understands the state as a pluralist community composed of individuals. As Robert Keohane notes, liberalism

...is an approach to the analysis of social reality that begins with individuals as the relevant actors ... [and] ... seeks to understand how organisations composed of aggregations of individuals interact. (Keohane, 1989:174)

The concept of the individual on which liberalism focuses is that of the rational individual. This shapes broader perceptions of the individual's relationship with the state. The concept of the enlightened and rational individual is at the heart of liberal ideas concerning representative, open government, open diplomacy and the influence on policy makers of public opinion which can be found in liberal thinkers such as Locke and Kant, and became prominent in the liberal thinking of the early twentieth century, encapsulated in the Wilsonian idea of self-determination (Knutsen, 1992; Kegley, 1993).

Whilst liberal, and particularly neo-liberal thinkers, have not rejected the analysis of the international system as anarchic (Baldwin, 1993:4), they see an international system which has more incentives towards cooperation and a greater focus on the potential for progress, learning and change. For instance, democratic peace theory suggests the spread of the community of liberal democratic states can potentially reduce the instance of international war (Doyle, 1986; Russett, 1993). In the economic field, a recurrent theme in liberalism is the idea that free trade and increased economic interdependence can both improve general prosperity and discourage war (Carr, 1939:45; Knutsen, 1992:154; Rosecrance, 1986). Therefore, liberal theorists have investigated how states learn to cooperate, and how

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highlights the role of individualism in liberalism, arguing that liberalism 'asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collective'.

transnational structures and interests evolve through processes of interaction, interdependence and integration in both the economic and political fields.<sup>8</sup>

In emphasising the potential for cooperation and interdependence, the liberal perspective also suggests that states may not be as hostile and self-regarding as realism implies. For instance, Karl Deutsch's work on security communities indicated that factors which contribute to mutual identification, shared values and procedures, and 'a trust bred of the predictability that mutual identification' brings are important in world politics, suggesting these are important to the formation of political associations (1957:36, 56).

Furthermore, liberal International Relations theorists, particularly the neo-liberals, have been more willing than realists to acknowledge a broader range of significant actors in world politics. As Keohane notes,

...liberalism focuses not merely on states but on privately organised social groups and firms. The transnational as well as domestic activities of these groups and firms are important for the liberal analysts, not in isolation from the action of states but in conjunction with them. (Keohane, quoted in Kegley, 1995a:26)

This pluralist conception of world politics acknowledges the role of non-state actors such as multinationals and non-government organisations (Keohane & Nye 1972; 1977; 1987). Neo-liberals examine the evolution and impact of institutions, acknowledging their role in facilitating and constraining state activities (Keohane, 1989; Keohane & Martin, 1995; Schweller & Priess, 1997). The role which regimes and international organisations play in the international system has also been a major feature of neo-liberal research (Krasner, 1983; Ruggie 1983).

Therefore, liberal International Relations theorists do acknowledge a broader range of significant actors in world politics, and conceptualise interaction as encompassing possibilities for change and integration. However, in practice, liberal International Relations theory still presents little conceptual space or active reflection on broad cultural communities such as the West. Despite acknowledging

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<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, works by Ernst Haas on the possibilities of learning by states, David Mitrany on processes of integration, Karl Deutsch on transnational communities, and Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye on transnational actors and interdependence evolving from increased interaction. See also Zacher & Matthew (1995) for a discussion of these trends in liberal international thought.

a role for different actors, civilisational identities are not easily accommodated in this paradigm. The conceptual space offered by this perspective for analysis of the West is once again, limited.

### *The West in Liberal theory*

Despite the fact that civilisational identities such as the West are not easily encompassed by the conceptual framework of most liberal international theorists, 'the West' and associated terms appear in the work of these scholars. For instance, Keohane & Nye(1977:28) refer to the role of force in 'East-West' relations in their discussion of complex interdependence, as does Hoffmann in his discussion of liberal international theory (Hoffmann, 1987:135). In these cases, the West implies the community of democratised and industrialised capitalist states in contrast to the community of communist states led by the Soviet Union. This is also the sense of the West which Richard Rosecrance employs when he speaks of 'Western weapons of technology' confronting 'Eastern numbers and ideological zeal'(1986:160-1). However, the West in liberal international theory is not only an ideological alliance constituted in antithesis to the communist bloc. If it was, one would assume that the end of the Cold War and the end of the 'East' would have led to the dispersal of the West. However, the idea of the West continues to be employed in contemporary liberal international theory. Authors such as Francis Fukuyama(1992) refer to the West as a community of liberal, democratic states achieving relatively peaceful relations amongst themselves in contrast to the still developing world in which power politics still prevail.<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, Fukuyama refers to the West in relation to societies based upon European cultural traditions in contrast to those, for instance, of Asia (1995b:37). David Deudney & John Ikenberry clearly articulate a sense of the West as a community with a 'reality beyond bi-polarity'. For them, the West encompasses the liberal democracies of western Europe, North America and Japan, forming a 'civic union' which draws on a tradition of 'industrial democracy' which

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<sup>9</sup> Max Singer & Aaron Wildavsky(1993) similarly argue that Western Europe, the United States and Canada, Japan and the Antipodes form a zone of peace and democracy, whereas the rest of the world, which includes East and Southeastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, most of Africa, Asia and Latin America, form a zone of turmoil and development where peace and democracy are not well established.

precedes and exceeds the Cold War. They understand the peace and stability of the West as based on the structural integration of their organs of security, economy and society (Deudney & Ikenberry 1993/4:18).

Not only do these authors suggest that the West is a significant form of community in world politics; their comments also suggest that it is a community deeply associated with the liberal tradition itself. In fact, 'the West' is the implicit context within which liberalism is embedded. As Anthony Arblaster observes, '[l]iberalism is the dominant ideology of the West' (1984:6). It is an ideology drawn from the experiences and philosophy of Western Europe; a philosophy of modernity, emerging out of the scientific, political and intellectual revolutions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, expressing faith in man's capacity for material and moral progress. Although a product of a secular revolution, it provided 'a basis for moral and ethical life consistent with deep-seated Christian values and beliefs' (Zacher & Matthew, 1995:111).

The development of liberal thought is closely linked to the political, social and intellectual evolution of Europe and North America. The intellectual antecedents of modern liberal theorists are predominantly European and American thinkers, such as Locke, Kant, Bentham, De Tocqueville and Hegel. Liberalism evolved from the European Enlightenment and the ideas of the British, French and American revolutions, including the underlying concepts of freedom, equality and individualism.<sup>10</sup> The liberal political models and institutions of republicanism and democracy derive from European and American institutions.

European expansion eventually encouraged the globalisation of liberal ideas, ultimately helping to stimulate revolt against European colonialism and imperialism (Panikkar, 1953; Bull, 1984b; Barraclough, 1964). However, liberalism remains closely equated with the West, and liberalisation with Westernisation. In the context of the Cold War, the West and liberalism were virtually synonymous, the West believing it represented the liberal ideals of

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<sup>10</sup> The idea of the rational, maximising individual emerged out of the European Enlightenment, with concepts of what constitutes the appropriate rights, standards and values of the individual deriving from the same source.



freedom, democracy and the free market. For Fukuyama, the 'triumph' of liberalism at the end of the Cold War is synonymous with the 'triumph' of the West:

The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of all viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. (Fukuyama, 1989:3)

Linguistically and conceptually, the West and liberalism blend into one.<sup>11</sup>

However, liberalism is not viewed universally as an emancipatory philosophy and has been associated by some with the continuing projection of Western control over the non-West.<sup>12</sup> Voices from the developing world have argued that liberal standards and procedures are a form of cultural imperialism, imposing Western standards under the guise of universal standards. For instance, during the Iranian Revolution, Western powers were perceived as having utilised Western ideas to undermine traditional culture and thus oppress and control the Iranian people economically and politically through the Shah. This culminated in the radical rejection of Western liberal values and models of government, as advocated in the teachings of Khomeini (Khumayni, 1981).

Arblaster argues that in the later twentieth century, liberalism has become increasingly conservative and more closely associated with describing the interests of Western societies, giving priority to the individual's freedom over issues such as achieving of equality in social and economic areas. This has helped to discredit liberalism in the Third World (Arblaster, 1984:326-332). For instance, in the contentious debate over human rights, it has been argued that the current human rights regime is not sufficiently sensitive to the diversity of social, economic, cultural and political realities in different countries (Liu, 1993; Alitas, 1993; Chua, 1992). Instead, human rights are often seen to represent Western values, pursued, at

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<sup>11</sup> For a further illustration of the close equation of liberal and Western values, see, for instance, Fuller(1995).

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, Mahbubani(1993a), Zakaria(1994), Kausikan(1993) and Dunne(1997).

times, to further the Western economic and political goals (Awanohara, Vatikiotis & Islam, 1993; Kausikan, 1993).<sup>13</sup>

Liberal norms and values are, therefore, closely associated with the West, despite the ambition of liberalism to describe universal values and aspirations for all humanity. Whilst liberal theoretical approaches in International Relations can encompass serious consideration of a broader range of actors, in practice, mainstream liberal theorists have not availed themselves of opportunities to reflect on the role in world politics of broader communities such as civilisational identities. In principle, liberal theories focus on the individual as the foundation of pluralist communities. In practice, modern liberal theorists have acknowledged the primacy of the states-system and focused on understanding how other actors interact with, and constrain, states in their analysis of institutions, regimes and processes of interdependence or regional integration. Although in the post-Cold War environment liberal international theory may provide openings for reflection on issues relating to civilisations, cultures and identity, it still provides no category in its framework of analysis for civilisational communities. Whilst references to the West as a significant actor in world politics can be found in liberal commentaries, the nature and role of this actor is rarely interrogated at a conceptual level. In part, this may be due to the embeddedness of liberal theory in Western historical and intellectual traditions. Whilst projecting a universalist theory, liberalism privileges the history, structure and traditions derived from Europe and the United States.

### ***Marxism, Neo-Marxism and the Unit of Class***

A third paradigm found in International Relations pertains to perspectives deriving from Marxist thought. Although Marx was not primarily concerned with the

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, at the 1997 meeting of ASEAN heads of state, the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mohamed Mahathir, called for a review of the UN Convention on Human Rights with a view to correcting its Western-centric focus. He argued that the 1948 UN Declaration 'was formulated by superpowers which did not understand the needs of poor countries' (*The Economist*, 2 August, 1997, 20). It should be acknowledged that, in principle, Western theorists and states acknowledge that human rights are indivisible, with social and economic rights deemed as important as political and civil. There is, however, greater debate on the role of community over individual rights. For discussion of these issues, see, for instance, Donnelly(1989), Chua(1992), Milner & Quilty(1996), Yash Gai(1995) and Vervoorn(1998) See also the Bangkok Declaration issued by the Ministers and representatives of Asian States , 29 March, 1993, prior to the Vienna Conference.

specific functions of international politics,<sup>14</sup> his ideas have significantly influenced International Relations theory, particularly in the area of international political economy, and the practice of international politics (Kubalkova & Cruikshank, 1985).<sup>15</sup> Marx viewed the states-system as a superstructural effect of the struggle between classes in a succession of modes of production (Linklater, 1989:2). It would ultimately wither away when replaced by a universal social order, which would be both classless and stateless. The most basic unit of analysis is, therefore, class (Kubalkova & Cruikshank, 1985:17). While Marx focused primarily on class division within and across states, later thinkers, such as the *dependencia* school and 'world systems' theorists looked more closely at the structures of the international system.<sup>16</sup> This mode of analysis, whilst discussing relations between states, gives primacy to economic relationships and the international division of production, labour and exchange rather than to political relations. Political relations become more a function of economic structure, as do relations between civilisations. Yet again, while the West is implicit both in the language and structures of Marxist-based International Relations thought, and in its application to international politics, again the scope for analysing the West within its theoretical structure is limited to that of an agent of structure.

### ***Marx and the West***

For many years the perception of what constituted East and West which dominated International Relations derived from the division between the liberal capitalist

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<sup>14</sup> As Maclean(1988:297) remarks, this is not unusual. International Relations has drawn theoretical inspiration from a wide range of scholars whose works were concerned with philosophy, political theory and economics and who did not focus specifically on international politics. See also Halliday(1994) for a discussion of historical materialism and the limited engagement of Marxist analysis in International Relations.

<sup>15</sup> The influence of Marx's methodological approach on developments in the area of Critical Theory is of great importance to recent developments in International Relations theory, but will not be discussed in detail in here. See Linklater(1996) and Cox(1981) for a discussion of how Marx's historical materialism has influenced the development of critical theoretical approaches to knowledge, and towards the structures and process of society.

<sup>16</sup> Like realism, Marxism has effectively accepted the state as the fundamental actor in international relations for the foreseeable future (Falk, 1990:270). As Maclean notes, in practice, most Marxist scholars have tended to focus their analysis at the level of the states-system (Maclean, 1988:298); although, as Halliday(1990) observes, the conception of the state found in Marxism differs markedly from that found in realism.

system and the communist system based on Marxist thought. This is ironic since Marxism is itself derived from Western intellectual traditions. As Wallerstein points out, Marx was also a child of the Enlightenment drawing from this tradition an emphasis on the secular, and a commitment to science and reason (Wallerstein, 1984:165; O'Brien, 1995). He drew from Hegel a concept of dialectical history, but one which entailed a sense of teleological progress (Turner, 1978:7). Much common ground exists between Marxism and liberalism in their attitudes to growth, nature and the more efficient harnessing of productive resources (Falk, 1990:269-70). Marx was writing within the context of the relatively stable and highly ordered nineteenth century European states-system on the cusp of the penetration of the non-Western world by imperialism and large-scale expansion of European investment capital (Kubalkova & Cruikshank, 1985:27-8; Linklater, 1989:5). His views of the non-Western world, particularly in his early work, have been described as being divided on East-West lines, with the West characterised by the triumph of individualism and the growth of capitalism, while the rest of the world was largely lumped together under the 'Asiatic mode of production', the most primitive of four historical stages of development (Sawer, 1978; Lichtheim, 1979:166; Turner, 1978). Although Turner notes some ambiguity in Marx's discussions of colonialism/imperialism,<sup>17</sup> Marx's remarks on colonialism's impact on the non-West suggest that he understood it to be ultimately a force for progress. The Asiatic mode of production, characterised by Oriental despotism, was seen as inherently stagnant and needing the stimulus of Western capitalism as a cruel but necessary revolutionary force (Marx, 1983a).<sup>18</sup> In 1853, for example, Marx argued:

England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating - the annihilating of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundation of Western society in Asia. (Marx, 1983b:337)

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, Marx's commentaries on Ireland suggest he viewed capitalist colonialism as a destructive force which could stunt development (Marx, 1930:239-56; Turner, 1978:17).

<sup>18</sup> Turner notes that Marx and Engels comment upon the Orient as societies which lack the critical ingredients for social evolution through conflict, class. India is referred to in *The Communist Manifesto* as a society without history (Turner, 1978:27).

In this respect, Marx explicitly distinguishes between civilisations of West and non-West on the basis of perceived levels of development (Lichtheim, 1979; Sawyer, 1978). His views on the value of progress, the beneficial impact of Western science and technology, and the superiority of the Western model of development place him firmly within the Western tradition.<sup>19</sup>

### *Neo-Marxism, International Relations and the West*

In the twentieth century, ideas derived from Marxist analysis have been used to explain inequalities between developed and underdeveloped countries. In analysing a world structured along a core/periphery division, it is a community's location in the international schema of production which is the relevant issue. For instance, Andre Gunder Frank examined the uneven development of capitalism not predicted by Marx or Lenin. He argued that the underdevelopment of peripheral countries was a direct result of development at the core which had drawn away surplus from the periphery through the structures established under colonialism (Frank, 1967). This method of analysis discusses the consequences of capitalist development for the non capitalist world. However, although it considers the consequences of Western expansion and colonisation, it is not overtly an analysis based upon distinctions between the West and non-West as civilisational identities.

Immanuel Wallerstein, one of the most prominent of structuralist scholars, does give some consideration to the role of the West as a distinct social system in international relations. In doing so, he provides useful insights into its nature and its role in world politics. However, his conception of the West is shaped by his interpretation of it as an element of the structure of the world system. Wallerstein's analysis of international relations focuses on the structure of this system rather than on the political communities within the structure; their role and place is related to their location in the world system. His analysis is holistic in that he rejects the employment of divisions between the realms of economy, polity and culture (Wallerstein, 1990b). Economic factors are represented as prior and the source of

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<sup>19</sup> Sawyer also critiques later models of Marxist thought, such as those found in the writings of Lenin, Stalin and Mao, for their Euro-centricity in essentially universalising the European or Western revolutionary experience in their analysis of the course of world revolution (Sawyer, 1978: 40-1).

significant processes and structure in his analysis.<sup>20</sup> The inter-state system is viewed as one institutional structure amongst a number in the integrated framework of the modern world system. This modern world system is the capitalist world system, a system which began in fifteenth century Europe and expanded outward achieving unprecedented global scope, incorporating other societies into it. The system of sovereign states is represented as the political framework which evolved in concert with the expansion of the capitalist system, as the framework which best facilitated this expansion (Wallerstein, 1990a; 1996:89). The West, as represented by the modern capitalist mode of production, became the dominant social system in the modern era and stands at the core of the capitalist world system.

Wallerstein argues that the modern capitalist mode of production, in absorbing all other social systems and establishing itself as the only world system, used the tools of the Enlightenment to promote itself as the only form of civilisation. In this respect, the West, or Western civilisation, came to absorb or replace the plurality of civilisations which preceded it (Wallerstein, 1984:165; 1991b:223). Therefore, Wallerstein does consider the role of civilisations on world politics. However, he does not treat civilisations as an empirical reality; rather they refer to 'a contemporary claim about the past in terms of its use in the present to justify heritage, separateness, rights' (1991b:235). Consequently, he views civilisational claims as a means of seeking legitimacy, or more recently, part of the rhetoric of resistance within a capitalist economy (Wallerstein, 1984:167). Therefore, civilisational interaction is treated as fundamentally a function or product of economic interaction.<sup>21</sup>

Wallerstein is interested in the impact the West has had on other members of the world system. Placing it at the core of the global core-periphery structure, his analysis is, in a literal sense, Western-centric since he views the West as the core around which all other societies rotate. However, his perspective focuses on the

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<sup>20</sup> Wallerstein writes: 'The capitalist world-economy is a system socially structured by an integrated axial division of labour, whose guiding principle is the ceaseless accumulation of capital' (1996:87).

<sup>21</sup> He argues that in the past, new world empires sought ideological legitimacy by claiming direct links with prior world empires, and in so doing, used the concept we call civilisation (Wallerstein, 1984:163-4).

West as an element of structure rather than as an evolving political community. His discussion of the ideas and norms which constitute the West focuses on their relation to the process of capitalist accumulation which is the real heart of his structural framework.

Neo-Marxist authors have, therefore, demonstrated some interest in, and awareness of, the West as a significant community in world politics. However, they focus primarily<sup>on</sup> the West as a system of production, operating at the core of the structure of the world system. It is the power relations between core and periphery, rather than the changing constitution of the West as a political community which interests this school of thought.

Once again, the language of the West and non-West permeates the application of neo-Marxist analysis: the West is synonymous with the core, the non-West with the periphery. In the language of international affairs, the West was for a long time automatically equated with the developed world; in other words, the successful, industrialised, capitalist economies which were members of the dominant international trade regime. The map of East and West, in terms of levels of development, is better explained by the map of nineteenth century European imperial expansion than by geography. For instance, the club of advanced industrialised societies included not only the geographic West, in the sense of Western Europe, but also those former colonies and dominions in which white, European culture had become predominant. How else could an Australia or New Zealand be considered as Western? The West of politicians and commentators such as Sukarno (Modelski, 1963), Mahathir(1986), Panikkar(1953) and Said(1978) is a West characterised by colonial expansion, and by economic and technological power. Therefore, a core/periphery analysis of recent world politics presents the West as the developed world, and the capitalist social system becomes synonymous with an aspect of the structure of the world system.

The West is, then, a critical community in structural theories of world politics. In contrast to realism and liberalism, the Marxist paradigm does in some respects accommodate analysis of the West as an actor in world politics. However, these theories are interested in the West as an aspect of the broader structure of the world system rather than as an evolving political community. Therefore, as with the more

prominent paradigms of International Relations thought, structural theories allows limited conceptual space for reflection on the role of the West as a civilisational identity.

### ***Why the Absence?***

The main paradigms of International Relations theory, then, provide limited theoretical space for the exploration and explanation of the constitution of the West as a community within world politics. Indeed, until the recent revival of interest in its role and future in the post-Cold War period, it was rarely seen to be a category that required explanation and exploration within the discipline. Realism displays little interest in communities beyond the state. Liberalism, whilst displaying more interest in transnational communities, has largely failed to provide analysis of the West as a distinct political community. Neo-Marxism draws the West into its analysis, but analyses it as an agent of the structure of the international system rather than a multifaceted political community. However, all these paradigms are built on the foundations of European historical experiences and intellectual traditions. International Relations theory is, therefore, deeply embedded in the history and philosophies of the West, making more puzzling the fact that so little room is provided for analysis of this important community and for its role in world politics.

Explaining this theoretical silence may be assisted by considering the West as in essence a cultural entity, a civilisational identity. The absence of reflection on the West in International Relations may then be usefully considered in the broader context of the discipline's treatment of issues of culture and identity. The epistemological and universalist theoretical premises of International Relations have constrained discussion of culture, and tend to marginalise the discussion of civilisations in the modern discipline.

### ***Culture and Epistemology***

Until recently, culture has been largely marginalised from the main paradigms of International Relations. A number of scholars have pointed to its importance but, as Walker notes, it has not been treated as an issue of significance or urgency in



International Relations (Walker, 1990:8; Rengger, 1992; Darby & Paolini, 1994). For Darby & Paolini, one of the causes of this marginalisation is the sheer complexity of culture. Characterising International Relations as a discipline which feels more comfortable with precise, concrete terms, they argue culture may be perceived as too loose and imprecise a concept for analysis (1994:382). This suggests that the epistemology of International Relations is one factor which has inhibited the study of culture. From the 1950s, when the discipline began to blossom, there was an impetus towards making International Relations a truly scientific enterprise. This was signalled by Hans Morgenthau's efforts to define International Relations as an empirical science which studied facts rather than values or aspirations (Morgenthau, 1964). As Hoffmann notes, efforts to apply instrumental reason and scientific methodology to the study of international relations were well received in the atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s, the era in which the behaviouralist revolution moulded the emergent social sciences (Hoffmann, 1977). The resurgence of neo-realism reinforced the positivist tradition, whilst reducing the emphasis on quantifiable methods (Cox & Sjolander, 1994). Neo-liberal institutionalists have also largely seen themselves as working within a positivist epistemological framework (Keohane, 1988, Goldstein & Keohane, 1993:4). The editors of the *Millennium* special issue on 'Culture and International Relations' support the contention that the positivist tradition strongly influenced International Relations theory through behaviouralism, limiting its capacity to deal with culture. Its bias for observable and measurable processes and behaviour, they argue, led to research agendas that excluded ideas, perceptions, meanings and values which did not lend themselves to quantification, inhibiting the study of culture in International Relations (Jacquin, Oros & Verweij, 1993:375).

### ***International Relations Theory and Universal Truths***

Criticisms leveled at the discipline's scientific methodology have been broadened in a more general critique of the rationalist epistemological foundations of the discipline, drawing attention to the universalist assumptions of the main paradigms of International Relations theory. Post-modern scholars have argued that from the eighteenth century Enlightenment to the present day, Western thought has been dominated by a scientific approach to knowledge and society, characterised as

empiricist and positivist, projecting a narrow concept of social reality as a universal agenda for all theory and practice (George, 1989). Scholars such as George, and Der Derian have criticised the 'totalising narratives' which presuppose modern, rational man as a universal category. They are critical of an ahistorical, rationalist approach which is unable to reflect upon the historical and social contingency of its own concepts (Der Derian, 1988; George & Campbell, 1990).

These criticisms have been leveled at a broad spectrum of International Relations scholarship, most noticeably neo-realist thought.<sup>22</sup> They highlight the tendency of the most prominent paradigms of International Relations to present theories of international relations which are universal in application; that is they presume to identify rules of behaviour or process in the international system which are relevant across time and space and ultimately operate regardless of the characters of the actors under consideration. Realism posits a vision of international relations as a realm of recurrence and repetition as actors pursue their quest for security and power. Liberal theories are ultimately premised on a faith in human progress and greater emancipation achieved through reason and the capacity to learn, presenting what is, ultimately, a teleological theory of world politics. Structuralist theories generated from Marxist foundations exhibit a belief in change generated by the dialectical forces of history. Therefore, these paradigms present theories which are presumed to be universally relevant and transcend local or regional cultural features and differences. In this sense, they present culture-neutral theories of world politics. This has meant that issues such as culture and identity are treated as variables which should be viewed as attributes of the actors that do not impact on the broader workings of the international system. Questions about culture, argues Walker, become translated into questions about 'values'; state sovereignty is represented as the ultimate source of value, thus the agent in conflict between different value communities (1990:9). Cultural diversity becomes subsumed into the claims of the state; cultural difference becomes an issue of national identity. Realism, in particular, has tended to treat culture as a factor which should be analysed at the unit, or state level. Therefore, culture may be removed from the

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Ashley(1984), Cox(1981), George(1994) Walker(1993).

equation, either as a factor which distracts the analyst from the 'facts' of power and capability, or, as in the work of Waltz, as a unit-level characteristic which does not alter the impact of the structure of the system which constrains all states in the same way (Waltz, 1979:80; Rengger, 1992:94).

In part, the tendency towards positing universal truths in International Relations is facilitated and reinforced by a tendency towards the neglect of history as a tool of critical analysis in the discipline. As Kratochwil notes:

For many, if not most, international relations scholars ... history is still, in the memorable words of Henry Ford, 'mostly bunk'. This does not mean that IR treatises are not peppered with historical 'data', but the use of 'history' shows mostly a confirmationist bent rather than a critical distance and theoretical sophistication. (Kratochwil, 1996:216)

The neglect of history as a critical tool is, in many respects, a consequence of the preference for scientific and quantitative methods which came to dominate the discipline in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the United States; but, as Kratochwil and Walker point out, there is also reason to draw attention to the limited and narrow notions often employed when history has been appealed to in the discipline. Historical discussions often focus on the emergence of the modern states-system from a past which Walker describes as '[l]ife before International Relations'. The sequel, he notes, will generally tend towards one of two trends; the liberal focus on progressive emancipations of statist communities, and the emergence of concepts such as freedom, rationality and justice; or the realist trend of violence and recurrence in the world of power politics (1989:169). This tendency limits the possibility for consideration of other communities, histories, possibilities within, let alone outside, the European context.

It has been suggested that the neglect of history is a result of the preference for thinkers in the discipline, particularly in neo-realism, to identify structures and fixity in world politics, rather than to focus on understanding the ebb and flow of change (Lapid, 1996; Cox, 1981). Walker argues that identifying structures of permanency is particularly alluring to those seeking to develop an explanatory science of international politics:

Discontinuity and historical transformation have long been viewed as threats to the accumulation of objective knowledge ... Against temporal flux, contingency, idiosyncrasy and revolutionary praxis, the identification of structural form offers an alluring possibility of a universalising objectivity. (Walker, 1989:171)

However, the neglect of history tends to undermine the discipline's capacity to reflect upon the broader social and historical context from which key concepts, institutions and presumptions about the international system have been derived (Chakrabarti Pasic, 1996). This not only leads to a failure to illuminate the contingency of concepts and presumptions, and to limit consideration of alternative possibilities, but also allows the discipline to perceive itself as universal and acultural since it tends to mask the cultural foundations upon which the discipline is built.

The universalist assumptions of International Relations theory is, then, a second important reason for the lack of reflection on the role culture in International Relations. However, the capacity to present these theories as universal is facilitated by a lack of awareness of, or reflection on, the degree to which they themselves emanate from particular cultural premises. Such an awareness qualifies the sense of International Relations theory as culture-neutral. Masked by aspirations toward universality and culture-neutrality is the fact, as noted above, that International Relations theories are largely founded upon Western European historical experiences and intellectual traditions.

We noted above the degree to which International Relations has drawn upon Western intellectual traditions. Whilst International Relations scholars may demonstrate knowledge of this legacy, this does not necessarily translate into a consciousness of how, or if, the cultural specificity of the legacy constrains its broader relevance to world politics. Furthermore, key texts are rarely discussed as ideas emanating from a particular historical or cultural context. Der Derian(1988) and Walker(1993) both note the tendency to reify certain texts, such as works of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Carr, elevating them above alternatives, and, furthermore, reifying particular readings of these texts without considering the

social and historical circumstances which contributed to their production.<sup>23</sup> In the process, Walker argues, the 'great tradition' of International Relations theory tends to present these figures as unproblematic, obscuring differing interpretations, and erasing the background of the historical transformations to which these thinkers were responding 'in favour of assertions that they all articulate essential truths about the same unchanging and usually tragic reality' (Walker, 1989:172).

Similarly, Der Derian and Walker argue that there is a tendency to project certain key concepts and institutions within International Relations, such as the state, sovereignty and security, as universal, rather than considering these as evolving at particular points in time to meet particular circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

This suggests that the conceptual evolution of International Relations is closely linked to the intellectual and historical evolution of the West, particularly Western Europe. As Richard Falk comments: 'The framework of modernism associated with the rise of the West is the main intellectual background against which thought about international relations developed' (Falk, 1990:268). Falk associates the shift from feudalism to modernity in Western Europe with shifts in legal and institutional frameworks from those based on natural law to legal positivism. The system evolved from one based on 'overarching principles and standards resting on revelation and authority' to one based on consent between territorial states (Falk, 1990:268). This was the system which became the foundation of a global international society.

The power of the West, in terms of political and economic capabilities, facilitated the expansion of Western ideas, institutions and structures. This has occurred

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<sup>23</sup> Der Derian describes the 'classical discourse' in International Relations, referring largely to the scholars of classical realism and the international society school, as canonical in their selection and interpretation of great texts. This discourse, he argues, privileges a Western, rationalist, analytical body of work over multicultural, revolutionary texts, imparting a conservative, rationalist order to reality (1988:191).

<sup>24</sup> Walker notes: 'It is tempting to minimise the significance of the historical experiences through which crucial concepts and ways of speaking have been formed. The longing for timeless categories has exercised a profound influence on many of those we associate with rationalism in the more philosophical sense of this term. Yet it is possible to trace the history of the terms 'state', 'sovereignty', 'individual', 'culture', 'security', and many other terms we now take for granted. In doing so, it is possible to discover how they emerged in response to specific historical conjunctions and contradictions (Walker, 1989:172).

through the globalisation of institutions such as the sovereign state, the system of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and, underlying these, the system of international law producing, in effect, the hegemony of Western political culture in international society.<sup>25</sup> As Falk comments, the globalist rhetoric which evolved in association with international society and, more broadly, international relations tended to 'disguise patterns of interstate hegemony, especially as between Europe and the rest of the world' (Falk, 1990:268). This hegemony masks the cultural premises of the international society and of International Relations in general. However, the perception of International Relations and the international systems it describes as culture-neutral inhibits inquiry into the role of cultural communities in International Relations, one of the most central of these being the West itself.<sup>26</sup>

### *Civilisations on the Margins*

For a variety of reasons, then, there has been a tendency to marginalise issues pertaining to culture in International Relations. The tendency to marginalise cultural communities has meant that consideration of the role<sup>of</sup> civilisations in contemporary International Relations has been minimal. There was interest in the role of civilisations in writings on world politics in the early twentieth century. Civilisations played a critical role in the ideas of scholars such as Oswald Spengler, Pitrim Sorokin and Arnold Toynbee. Elements of this interest remained in the work of British International Relations scholars in the international society school. It was also evident in the work of international historians such as Adda Bozeman, William McNeill and Fernand Braudel. However, the state-centric tendencies of post-war realism and the narrowing of theoretical constructs during the Cold War effectively pushed this area of inquiry out of main schools of the discipline. In the

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<sup>25</sup> For discussion of the concept of the expansion of international society, see Bull & Watson(1984), Watson(1992). The evolution of concepts of international society and international law have been discussed as closely linked to the concept of civilisation as an aspect of Western hegemony. See Gong(1984) and Keal(1995).

<sup>26</sup> Chakrabarti Pasic(1996) also stresses the need to highlight the social and historical context from which the international system emerges. She criticises scholars such as Wendt and Buzan for focusing on interaction alone as a factor shaping the character of actors in the international system. Chakrabarti Pasic stresses the importance of shared cultural systems for the evolution of international relations and communities.

post-Cold War era, renewed attention has been stimulated by the challenges of understanding political community and identity.

As with the term 'the West', occasional references to civilisations can be found in International Relations literature, yet these references often demonstrate a lack of reflection on a conceptual level of the role and nature of civilisations. For instance, Morgenthau's references to civilisations cited above assume the primacy or hegemony of Western civilisation. Gilpin's (1979) references imply a sense of teleology; civilisations were communities that existed in history. The plurality of civilisations of the past, however, have been subsumed into the global span of Western civilisation and its political institutions. Wallerstein, as noted, links civilisational claims to claims of ideological legitimacy. As a result of this lacuna of conceptual reflection in International Relations, the recent revival of discussion of the role of civilisational interaction in world politics fell into something of a theoretical vacuum.

However, the term is ever more present in the language of world politics. Underlying its usage are a complex range of implicit assumptions. The tendency to neglect civilisations in the discipline may have been encouraged by the complexity of the concept.<sup>27</sup> It may also have been enhanced by a sense of redundancy, with civilisation being associated with political communities of the past, as in Gilpin's usage. However, whilst the concept of civilisation is certainly a complex one, it is not redundant. It can be viewed as informing important underlying assumptions about the cultural world order and interaction in world politics.

## ***Conclusion***

A greater awareness of assumptions regarding civilisation may enhance International Relations' capacity to reflect on the nature and role of the West in world politics. The West remains largely uninterrogated in the main paradigms of International Relations theory. These conceptual gaps are at least in part a result of a broader tendency to marginalise issues relating to culture and cultural communities in world politics by the discipline. This tendency, however, tends to

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix for a further discussion of 'civilisation'.

stifle inquiry not only into the impact of culture in shaping communities, perceptions and interests in world politics, but also in shaping the discipline of International Relations itself. The cultural premises that underlie the main theoretical paradigms of International Relations tend to be hidden. The existing paradigms are unlikely to provide us with the tools to reflect upon the nature and role of the West in world politics. Therefore, we need a framework for bringing analysis of conceptions of the West and, through this, the role of civilisations into International Relations to facilitate our understanding of the possibilities for world order that are being envisaged.



## *Chapter Two*

### *Towards a Framework for Conceptualising the West in International Relations*

The preceding chapter noted the absence of reflection on the West and on civilisations more broadly from International Relations theory, and considered some factors which may have produced this gap. The challenge presented by this absence is to provide a framework for thinking critically and conceptually about the West and civilisational interaction in International Relations. Any such framework should suggest a way to critically analyse various conceptions of the West, linking these to the broader context of assumptions about the cultural world order, whilst allowing for consideration of the complexity and contextuality of the West.

In proposing such a framework, this chapter first considers the complexity of conceptions of the West and its contingency in relation to the historical and intellectual environments in which these conceptions are articulated. The framework suggests ways of thinking about the West in the context of this complexity and contingency. It then discusses how we might draw on literature on the politics of identity and representation in constructing a framework for analysis, suggesting that we treat the West as a civilisational identity and an imagined community. Finally, it establishes a framework through which various conceptions of the West will be analysed in subsequent chapters.

#### *Conceptualising the West*

The West features prominently in the history and language of world politics. The West is often presented as a cohesive community, its evolution following a natural progression from ancient times to the future. Yet the legacy of ideas and concepts on which the West draws is diverse and, at times, contradictory (Dasenbrock,

1991). In the twentieth century, the concept of the West evokes very different images in different contexts. The West of the early twentieth century was still an imperial West. Through the processes of trade and colonialism, Europeans had acquired political authority over the peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas. Western states possessed unprecedented strength and authority in the military, economic, political and cultural realms. Political authority was supported by, but in turn supported, military might and economic strength. Economic development helped to fund military structures, and military institutions stood in defence of economic expansion. The West's power was based on an interweaving of all three dimensions, and fired by continuing technological innovation. These resources and capabilities were rationalised and further enhanced by the perception of Western civilisation as more advanced and other societies more backward and in need of Western guidance or governance (Bull & Watson, 1984; Said, 1978; Keal 1995). Even such a power as the United States, whose colonial possessions were limited (to the Philippines post 1898), came to wield enormous power in contrast to, and increasingly over, the non-Western world. The West of this era is likely to be conceived of as predominantly white, Christian, and with its heartland in Europe.

The First World War undermined both the confidence, and image and authority of the Western powers, but they still retained unprecedented power relative to other societies. However, the post-war period saw efforts to introduce Western liberal principles into the structures and institutions of international politics. This was demonstrated by the establishment of the League of Nations and the promotion of international law, open diplomacy and self-determination.<sup>1</sup>

The liberal dimension of the West became more pronounced in the international realm in the mid twentieth century. The concept of the West in this era is most immediately associated with resistance to forms of totalitarianism, first in the form of fascism, then communism. In this context, the West appears more as an ideological community than a territorial, racial or religious one. Geographically,

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<sup>1</sup> This did not mean the relinquishment of imperial possessions, but the Mandates system demonstrated a desire to legitimise the continuing governance of colonial peoples on developmental grounds. This entailed the idea that the international community had a 'sacred trust' to govern and 'nurture' peoples not yet sufficiently developed to practice self-governance (Gong, 1984:76-80).

the line dividing West and East was drawn in Europe, and the heartland of the West moved towards the United States, but the term 'the West' effectively assumed a conceptual rather than a geographical meaning, connoting a community of liberal, capitalist societies.<sup>2</sup> However, the conceptions of the West in the bipolar context co-existed with the concept of the West constituted in antithesis to the Third World. In this context the West represented the world's wealthy developed and industrialised societies.<sup>3</sup> The axis of wealth and development in the 1950s and 1960s which distinguished West from non-West, strongly resembled the axis of race distinguishing white from non-white peoples. Furthermore, the legacy of colonialism remained as a further axis of difference, with many countries in Asia and Africa only gaining their independence during this period.<sup>4</sup>

In the post-Cold War era, the conceptions of the West no longer revolve exclusively around concepts of ideology or development. Some commentators have speculated that the West as a political community would be unable to retain its cohesion without the threat of the Soviet Union (Harries, 1993).<sup>5</sup> However, despite the demise of the communist East, and the rapid development of previously underdeveloped and post-colonial societies, particularly in East Asia, the West as a concept has become neither redundant nor universal. It remains part of the political vocabulary in discussions about the maintenance of international order, security and economics. It is, perhaps, increasingly understood as a regional, cultural community than a global one; one which is powerful but not unrivalled (Huntington, 1996a). However, in an increasingly fluid international environment,

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<sup>2</sup> In theory, this meant attachment to political and economic liberalism but in practice the Western powers tolerated many illiberal regimes who were, nevertheless, anticommunist.

<sup>3</sup> This is the concept of the West which is to be found in colonial and post-colonial critics of the West. See for instance Sukarno in Moldelski(1963), Panikkar(1953) or Mahathir(1986).

<sup>4</sup> These include Algeria and Uganda (1962), Singapore and Brunei (1963) and Zambia (1964). Angola and Mozambique, and Fiji and Papua New Guinea in the Pacific did not achieve independence until the 1970s.

<sup>5</sup> Harries describes the political West as an artificial construction which emerged as a response to a threatening and hostile 'East'. He argues that, despite sharing 'vast commonalities' in areas such as history, culture, political ideas and institutions, the countries of the West - Europe and America - have only formed a community in response to overwhelming threats. This has occurred in 1917-18, 1941-45 and the Cold War. Without such a threat, Harries maintains that differences and incompatibilities will overwhelm the unity of that community. See also O'Brien(1992/3) and Walt(1994).

it is hard to conceive of the concept of the West becoming a purely territorial or racially exclusive one.<sup>6</sup>

What these broad conceptualisations of the West demonstrate is that it is a community which not only changes and is represented differently over time, but exhibits apparent inconsistencies. The West is first and foremost a locational concept, yet the community it encompasses expanded its territorial scope to establish and include societies from all over the globe. The West might primarily be conceived of as based on peoples of the white race, yet it has incorporated people of many races in its communities and alliances over the years. The West may be conceived of as primarily a Christian community, yet it is equally characterised by the secularisation of public life. Furthermore, many people of the Christian faith, in Russia or the Middle East for instance, would not be seen as part of Western society. The West was the birthplace of liberalism and liberal values are frequently held to be the normative heart of the West. Yet the West also created the most powerful series of colonies and empires which the globe has ever seen. Moreover, it was the birthplace of both fascism and of communism, an ideology seen as the antithesis of the West during the Cold War. The West is widely perceived as representing wealth and power; yet within Western societies there existed, and continues to exist, poverty and enormous inequalities.

This prompts several questions. Are these all the same West? Does one of these conceptions represent the authentic West? The discussion suggests that the West is a complex and varying community and that rather than seeking one authentic and definitive West, it may be more useful to consider what such variation tells us about the West and the role of like communities in world politics. Whilst it has strong territorial associations, the West is not simply defined by inhabiting a particular territory; whilst it has strong racial and religious overtones, it cannot

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, as noted in Chapter One, Deudney & Ikenberry(1993/4), define the contemporary West as consisting of Western Europe, North America and Japan. It is based on the logic of 'industrial liberalism' and distinguished by a private economy, a common civic identity and public institutions. Its hub, and ultimately the model upon which this conception is built, is the United States. These authors recognise the importance which political culture and shared norms play in their conception of the West. However, there is a tendency for their discussion to overlook tensions, inconsistencies and problems which exist within these communities. See Cummings(1994) Falk(1994b) and Walt(1994) for commentaries.

simply be defined as a racial or religious community. It is a community which encompasses a broad range of material and normative dimensions. Furthermore, perceptions of the central characteristics which distinguish it vary, across time and perspectives. This indicates that conceptions of the West should be explored with an awareness of the context in which they are articulated.

These features pose difficulties for constructing a framework for analysis. They suggest that it is problematic to construct a framework which seeks to identify essential qualities of the West which persist across time and contexts in order to ascertain the definitive West. Whilst this study acknowledges the importance of recognising and seeking to identify continuities in conceptions of the West, it argues that it is also necessary to address the complexity of the West. Rather than seeking to eliminate this complexity, it can be useful to ask what this tells us about the West as a community, and what it implies for its interaction with other communities in world politics.

The West is often perceived as not simply a military or political alliance, but as a community distinguished by a common culture, histories and traditions. One of the first tasks of this framework is to seek to come to grips with the nature of the West as a cultural entity. As Richard Falk has observed, '[t]hose who emphasise the cultural basis of political action often tend to regard the appropriate unit of analysis to be civilisation rather than the state' (1990:268). In keeping with the spirit of this observation, this study views the West as a *civilisational identity*. By a civilisational identity, I mean a form of identity which locates the immediate ethnic or national community within the context of a broader, cultural community; a transnational community, often extensive in geographical and temporal scope. As Braudel's definition of civilisations reminds us, these are communities which endure across lengthy periods of time and which comprise both material and philosophical dimensions (Braudel, 1980). A civilisational identity may encompass a multiplicity of languages, ethnicities, religious denominations; but it is united by some elementary shared histories, traditions, values and beliefs. These influence the way people believe the world should be, the goals that should be striven for and, perhaps more fundamentally, the things that are at stake. It may also influence perceptions of what is the acceptable mode of conduct in the global arena.

Civilisational identity is important in helping to form values, priorities, goals and norms. In this respect, a civilisational identity is a normative community. Viewing the West as a civilisational community also allows us to be more comfortable with understanding the West conceived as broad in geographic and temporal range. Consequently, it can be conceived of as capable of change, evolution, diversity and even inconsistency!

As noted above, to date, the International Relations community has largely focused on the modern state as the predominant political community in world politics. This is a territorially defined community, its borders inscribed on maps, its population enumerated in censuses, its government and constitution operating through officials, representatives, and formally designated channels and institutions. However, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out, despite the firm material institutions and structures through which it is represented, the community which underlies the nation-state is as much a social as a tangible, material construction (Anderson, 1991). Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' presents the nation-state as something more than a territorial community containing a population. Indeed, he argues that the demarcation and quantification of the state that instruments such as the map and the census performed *required* an ability to conceptualise a community existing amongst diverse and dispersed populations with little or no physical or day-to-day contact, but were able to conceive of themselves existing simultaneously (Anderson, 1991:24). In this sense, the community must be imagined to permit it to exist. Anderson conceives of the community of the nation as 'a deep, horizontal comradeship' (1991:7). Its existence is facilitated by some form of mental bonds. Anderson's study focuses on the importance of language, in facilitating the process of imagining the nation in the modern world. He discusses the role of language in establishing links between peoples across time and space, and in forming the bonds of attachment between people and the imagined community of the nation:

What the eye is to the lover ... language ... is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed. (1991:154)

Without such mental bonds, the community of the nation would have little or no substance.<sup>7</sup>

Anderson's work on 'imagined communities' can be usefully applied to thinking about civilisational entities such as the West. The West is not a clearly defined territorial entity. It is not constituted by any single language or ethnic group. However, this is not to say that it does not have an identity constituted by boundaries, symbols, myths and histories and a broad, if dispersed, sense of fraternity. The West is an imagined community in the sense that it is a transnational community which extends over a broad geographical and temporal canvass, encompassing peoples who may have no immediate contact with one another, but who perceive themselves to be part of it. There is, therefore, a shared identity and some element of common interests, ideas and values. As an identity, it entails a fluid and dynamic sense of community. The West is not linked by a common language, but the 'language' which constitutes it draws on concepts and principles whose lineage is traced deep into history and perceptions of history play a crucial role in representing, legitimising and perpetuating the 'imagined community'.

Considering the West as imagined community helps in coming to terms with the intangible dimensions of its role as actor and influence in International Relations. In addition, it allows us to be more comfortable with its complexity. Viewing the West as a civilisational identity further contributes to our acceptance of this complexity. Treating the West as a civilisational identity also facilitates examining perceptions of the West in the context of broader concepts and assumptions about cultural world order.

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<sup>7</sup> This is not to understate other critical factors in state formation, such as those outlined by Charles Tilly (1975), including war and the development of administrative and taxation systems, and the evolution of norms of governance and legitimacy. Nor does it underestimate the importance of the apparatus of the state in generating an image of the nation to which loyalty could be pledged and identity focused. What is important in Anderson's work, however, is the identification of intersubjective understandings of community across time and space as a critical element in creating and sustaining the modern nation-state.

## *Identity Politics and International Relations*

In addition to providing useful tools with which to approach the study of the West, viewing the West as a civilisational identity and an imagined community encourages us to draw on literature from studies of the politics of identity and representation.<sup>8</sup> Discussion of the politics of identity was not a prominent aspect of International Relations literature until the 1980s. Questions of identity tended to be treated at the unit level, being subsumed into studies of domestic and comparative rather than international politics (Bloom, 1990; Tickner, 1996). As Lapid(1996:6) comments, identity like culture has tended to be treated as self-evident and unproblematic by much of the theoretical literature. In effect, this meant privileging certain political communities and treating their identities as given, rather than investigating the processes through which political identities are constructed and the way in which they shape interests and actions. These privileged identities have been the state and the nation. The collective political identity of the state as equated with the nation has effectively become the presumed starting point for International Relations (Tooze, 1996). The tendency to accept these collective identities as given led to a fairly static, monolithic perception of identities. States and nations tended to be assumed as stable and homogeneous in their identities (Krause & Renwick, 1996).

Since the 1980s, however, interest in the role of identities in international relations has become more evident. As Neumann(1996), notes, one of the first full length studies to critically discuss the role of identity politics in the context of civilisational encounter and world politics, Todorov's *The Conquest of America and the Question of the Other* (1984), was not written in the discipline of International Relations.<sup>9</sup> However, International Relations scholars such as Derian, Shapiro and Campbell have set out to consider the impact of processes of identity politics on world politics, drawing into International Relations insights

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<sup>8</sup> This study does not, however, presume to offer an exhaustive discussion of the literature on identity politics. Instead, it draws on insights from aspects of this literature to assist in developing its own framework of analysis.

<sup>9</sup> Todorov is a student of comparative literatures, as is Edward Said, another prominent scholar whose *Orientalism* (1978) has been important in the discussion of the construction of identity in encounters in world politics.



from disciplines such as philosophy and linguistics (Neumann, 1996; Doty, 1996). In addition, feminist International Relations scholarship has been an important force which has 'nudged' the discipline into questioning whom the nation and state really represent and speak for, drawing attention to the significance of other identities, such as gender, which are formed below and across state level. This actually presents a more realistic perspective of the complexity of the communities which operate in world politics (Zalewski & Enloe, 1995:302; Tickner, 1992).

Interest in the role of identity politics in shaping international relations has been further stimulated by developments in world politics. In the post-Cold War era, issues relating to forms of identity such as ethnicity and religion have become increasingly prominent as world politics emerges from the shadow of a bi-polar ideological divide. Globalisation has also heightened this interest. The globalisation of production, services, finance and labour, and the consequences of flows of refugees and migrants, for instance, has created challenges to traditional conceptualisations of political communities and their identities.<sup>10</sup>

Identity is now being more consciously incorporated into the traditional agenda of International Relations. Security studies and democratic peace theory have sharpened the focus on perceptions of threats or possibilities for cooperation which arise from shared or differing political identities (Tickner, 1996:147-8). However, here again, the identities of the units involved are still taken as a given. Constructivist scholars, in contrast, have demonstrated an interest in the interplay between identity and interest formation in shaping the structures and institutions of the international system. These authors maintain that the identities of states are not exogenously given, but emerge through interaction. They are shaped by the domestic and international environment.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This is not to argue that these forces were not important influences during the Cold War, but that their impact often tended to be overshadowed or absorbed into the ideologically-structured system. See, for instance, essays in Krause & Renwick(1996), Alker & Shapiro(1996) Linklater & Macmillan(1995) for discussions of some of the challenges to concepts of community and identity.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Wendt(1992;1996); Katzenstein(1996) and Reus-Smit(1996). See Chakrabarti Pasic(1996) for a critique of Wendt's overreliance on interaction and neglect of historical, social and cultural factors and institutions which shape interaction.

However, exploration of the role of identity in international relations has been most evident in critical theory.<sup>12</sup> Critical perspectives have strongly challenged the perception of political identities as autonomous and fixed. Like the constructivists, these authors are critical of the failure of the main paradigms of International Relations to consider the structures and institutions of world politics, and the international system as socially constructed rather than objective givens (George & Campbell 1990; Campbell, 1992; George, 1994).<sup>13</sup> One consequence, they suggest, is the neglect of the role of identity in shaping world politics. They argue that the way in which identities are constituted and represented is in itself a significant exercise of power and important aspect of world politics (Shapiro, 1989; Campbell, 1992). Rejecting the notion that the state or nation are the only significant collective identities in world politics, critical theorists treat identities as multiple, complex and constantly in the process of constitution and reconstitution (Alker & Shapiro, 1996).

### ***'Community or Death': Processes of Identification and Differentiation***

The evolving interest in the role of identity politics and the formation of political communities and their identities creates opportunities for reflection on a broader range of communities in world politics and provides an opening for exploration of the role of civilisational identities in world politics. It also offers useful insights into the processes of the constitution of community and identity which can assist in devising a framework for analysis of the West.

The concepts of community and of identity are closely interwoven. A shared identity is an essential component to the constitution of a community. A sense of community implies a group of people who perceive themselves to have something in common at some level, a sense of shared identity. The constitution of identity is

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, works by Shapiro, Der Derian, Walker, Campbell, Dalby, Klein, Doty, Linklater, and some of the essays in Lapid & Kratochwil(1996).

<sup>13</sup> Tooze(1996) points to the separation of object and subject which is maintained in the approach of orthodox International Relations as a central problem in their treatment of identity. This separation tends to privilege objective knowledge over subjective. Given the inherently intersubjective nature of identity formation, this limits the capacity of these approaches to deal seriously with this issue.

part of the process of defining political community; of defining the borders of inclusion and exclusion and the basis upon which they are drawn.

The impulse to identify with the group is a fundamental human impulse. In its most basic form, the individual human must engage with the community to survive; infants, for instance, depends on their immediate community for nurture. 'We are born into community or death' remarks Ann Norton(1988:11). Likewise, William Bloom discusses identification as:

...an inherent and unconscious behavioural imperative in all individuals. Individuals actively seek ... to maintain, protect and bolster identity in order to maintain and enhance psychological security. (Bloom, 1990:53)

However, humans rarely limit their sense of identification to only one group. An individual can simultaneously identify with a variety of collectives in different contexts. This is particularly the case in contemporary societies. As Connolly notes, 'the channels that connect personal identity to collective identity in late-modern states are multiple and deep'(1991:198). Each community may appeal to a different quality or need in the individual. Bloom, in his discussion of the links between personal identity, national identity and international relations, argues that shared group identification can be triggered only by real and meaningful experience. He further argues that the individual must perceive positive psychological benefits from such identification; the community must have some form of relevance to the individual to invoke identification (Bloom, 1990:51-2): 'Identities can be imposed, but most are not; rather they are embraced because they deliver what people want' (Ferguson & Mansbach, 1996:29).

Identities are social as much as psychological constructs. A basic element of identification is the perception of some form of common quality or experiences amongst the potential members of the community. They must have something, though not necessarily everything, in common.<sup>14</sup> Norton argues that an awareness

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, Smith identifies the basic common assumptions of national communities as an historical territory or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common or mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members; and a common economy with territorial mobility for all members. He suggests that the common assumptions which characterise an ethnic community include a collective proper name; a myth of common ancestry; shared historic memories; one or more differentiating elements of common culture; an association with a specific

of this commonality provides a basis for the establishment of common interests, goals and even common action (Norton, 1988:47).<sup>15</sup> This may lead to the establishment of structures and, or, norms to enhance or protect the common identity. Conversely, it could be argued that shared practices can produce a sense of common interests and collective identity.

An awareness of a collective identity at some level, or in relation to certain attributes, values or goals forms an important aspect of the constitution of a community. The community is, in part, defined by the ways in which this collective identity is defined. This process of definition involves the drawing of boundaries which describe who may be included or excluded from the community (Linklater, 1990). The process of definition involves differentiation.<sup>16</sup>

The process of differentiation is an inescapable part of identity formation. In recognising that which is different, the self begins to define itself:

Meaning is made out of difference. Definition begins in the negation, in the designation of what a thing is not ... Oppositions - left and right, black and white, in and out, man and women - provide points of reference and sets of linear relations which, when placed in relation to one another, construct those networks of meaning that cultures comprise. (Norton, 1988:3)<sup>17</sup>

Without differences, argues Connolly, an identity loses its distinctness and solidity: 'Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty' (Connolly, 1991:64).<sup>18</sup>

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'homeland' and a sense of solidarity amongst significant sectors of the population (Smith, 1991:14, 21).

<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Bloom proposes that '[t]hrough a shared identification, individuals are linked within the same psychological syndrome and will act together to preserve, defend and enhance their common identity' (1990:26).

<sup>16</sup> Neumann(1996) identifies four main strands in social theorising on collective identity. They vary in their conception of the constitution and relationship between self and other, but the process of differentiation and conceptualising an other is central to all.

<sup>17</sup> Relating this to theories of identification, she observes that '[t]he construction of identity described by Freud and Lacan begins in the recognition of difference, in the opposition of self and other' (Norton, 1988:3).

<sup>18</sup> By this, I understand Connolly to mean that difference is perceived as creating something quite distinct from, even alien to, oneself.

The move to establish an authentic or homogeneous identity for a community can prove dangerous, primarily for those constituted as the 'other' in antithesis to one's own identity. This can mean not only the exclusion of the other but also its constitution as inferior or threatening. Connolly observes that

...a powerful identity will strive to constitute a range of differences as intrinsically evil, irrational, abnormal, mad, sick primitive, monstrous, dangerous, or anarchical - other. It does so in order to secure itself as intrinsically good, coherent, complete, or rational and in order to protect itself from the other that would unravel its self-certainty and capacity for collective mobilisation if it established its legitimacy. The constellation of the constructed other therefore becomes both essential to the truth of the identity and a threat to it, by just being other. (1991:65-6)

Connolly appears concerned here, not with the necessity to differentiate, but with the tactics of devaluing the other because of this difference. The other can become a scapegoat created and maintained to secure the appearance of a true identity. Furthermore, the drive to achieve self-certainty, to confirm the 'true' nature of one's identity is fraught with implications if we accept the contention that identities are not only multiply held, but also relative and repeatedly constituted, rather than fixed and objectively given (Campbell, 1992; Ashley & Walker, 1990:260).

Edward Said's discussion of the constitution of the 'Orient' anticipates Connolly's hypothesis. In his analysis of European and American encounters with peoples of the Middle East, Said describes the constitution of the Orient as a device which, in itself, helped to constitute and reinforce the identity of the West. Said argues that Orientalism was a family of ideas which constructed the Orient as a community in antithesis to the West. The East was irrational, authoritarian, lazy; the West rational, logical, peaceful, liberal, vigorous and scientific. The depiction of the Orient is highly generalised, ahistorical and threatening to the West. Said's analysis presents a West which perceives the Orient as distinctly different, hostile and essentially inferior. Such perceptions helped to reinforce the West's self-perception as progressive, and justified in its intellectual and institutional subjugation of such hostile and backward societies, if only for their own benefit (Said, 1978).<sup>19</sup> Such

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<sup>19</sup> V.G. Kiernan made similar observations. See, for instance, his discussion of the British in India. The Indians are variously stereotyped as backward, apathetic, cruel, treacherous: 'By thinking the

perceptions were crucial to concepts such as the 'civilising mission' which normatively legitimated European colonial expansion.<sup>20</sup>

Tvetzan Todorov also demonstrates concern with regard to the impact that tactics of differentiation can have on the course of civilisational interaction. In his analysis of the European encounter with the peoples of the Americas, Todorov outlines a form of 'othering' described as the 'double movement'. In these encounters, difference is equated with inferiority, whereas equality is equated with similarity. He argues that, in their encounters with the peoples of the 'New World', the Spanish largely alternated between viewing the 'Indians' as either 'noble savages' or 'dirty dogs'. They were perceived as people without culture. It was, therefore, legitimate to project one's own culture onto these 'objects'. Todorov argues that the Spanish, as led by Columbus and Cortes, were unable to treat with these peoples 'as a subject, having the same rights as oneself, but different, Columbus has discovered America, but not the Americans' (Todorov, 1984:49). The peoples of the New World were presented with the options of conquest or conversion, but not co-existence.

Todorov confronts the problem of meeting the other as both different and equal.<sup>21</sup> His work demonstrates how processes of differentiation are of relevance to the conduct of international and inter-civilisational relations, and how a community's perception of its identity can be constituted, reconstituted and reinforced through

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worse of their subjects', Kiernan argues, 'they avoided having to think badly of themselves' (Kiernan, 1969:35).

<sup>20</sup> Bernard McGrane (1989) observes the shifting grounds on which the West differentiated itself from the other. In the sixteenth century, the other was distinguished on the basis of religion; the revolution in scientific and humanist thought then saw the other as chiefly constituted by their degree of enlightenment or ignorance; in the nineteenth century, the criteria of differentiation shifted to degrees of evolution and progress.

<sup>21</sup> Todorov's discussion of the debate between Sepúlveda and Las Casas at Valladolid demonstrates that even so, the Europeans drew upon two distinct, but equally Euro-centric traditions in their perception of the Indians. He argues that Sepúlveda's position was based essentially on the Aristotelian principles of social hierarchy whereas Las Casas' defence of the Indians derived from a more egalitarian Christian tradition, but a tradition which saw equality stemming from men's qualities as Christians, or potential Christians, rather than an innate equality amongst men. If seen as equal, then equality is translated into sameness, making it legitimate to project one's own values on the Indians, ignoring differences and forcing assimilation. If different, then difference is translated into inferiority, justifying their destruction or enslavement (Blaney & Inayatullah, 1994:28). The choice offered to these people was, then, conquest or conversion (Todorov, 1984:151-167).

contact with those perceived as different. In describing the carnage and upheaval heaped upon the Indians, he illustrates the potentially devastating consequences that equating difference with inferiority may have on these relations.

Todorov's discussion of the relationship between the Spanish and the peoples of the Americas depicts a series of encounters in which the sense of difference and distance between two broad cultures was vast and apparently radical. These encounters doubtless helped to bolster the Europeans' self-image as a superior and progressive culture. In a more recent context, Bradley Klein's work discusses how the identity of the West was constituted in response to the perceived threat of the Soviet Union. Klein analyses the creation and perpetuation of NATO as an institution, arguing its success derived as much from the unity which it provided within the fragile post-war West, as from deterrence of its Soviet adversary. NATO, argues Klein, was widely perceived not only as a military institution, but one which protected Western values, the Western way of life.<sup>22</sup>

A community's sense of its own identity is constituted and reinforced through encounters with that perceived as outside the community, but it is also shaped by processes of differentiation within. In Zygmunt Bauman's words: 'There are friends and enemies. And then there are *strangers*' (1996:143). The stranger is the outsider who comes not to visit but to stay. They are 'other' within the community and as such can be seen as presenting a particular threat by upsetting the spatial separation and order of inside/outside. As Ann Norton argues, political identity often emerges with greater clarity when the polity confronts the individual whose inclusion is ambiguous, or in other words, where the lines of difference may not at first be so clearly drawn:

In confronting the question of whether these people belong within or without the polity, those within it are obliged to enunciate those differences that distinguish them from all others, to consciously define the limits of their identity. (Norton, 1988:4)

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<sup>22</sup> As Klein notes, in the post-war period, the West was viewed by analysts such as George Kennan as threatened by the 'weakened fabric of Western life' as much as by Soviet military power. However, with the onset of the Cold War, the West was faced with an adversary 'whose culture and world view offered ... a reverse image of everything celebrated by the emergent allies' (Klein, 1990:314, 317).

In this way, the process of defining the community's identity enhances or contributes to the constitution of the community by helping to define the parameters of the group, defining the qualities thought appropriate and those alien to it. For Dalby, the 'other' provides the axis on which acceptable and unacceptable political activities and identity are constructed (Dalby, 1990:13). For Klein, an institution like NATO helps to produce and protect a singular image of Western identity as progressive, modern and industrialised, marginalising a variety of other identities relating to religion, gender, or race. Such identities can become sites of political contestation. In this, they can be seen as threatening the perceived unity and identity of the West<sup>23</sup> whilst making the political identity of the West appear homogeneous rather than multifaceted. However, these contests may also provide the vehicle for extending or redefining the community's identity over time.

The process of differentiation, particularly with respect to those 'liminal' to the community, helps to generate abstract principles upon which the community or polity is based. It helps to define the normative dimensions of any community. It also contributes to the conceptualisation of the community as an apparently objective entity, independent of the views or wishes of any single constituent members. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of the community as an objective entity assists the community to continue beyond the active participation of any single member and to retain what Norton calls a constant character over time (Norton 1988:53-4).

### ***The Boundaries and Bonds of Community***

Differentiation facilitates the drawing of the boundaries of the community. In turn, boundaries reinforce strategies of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>24</sup> As Linklater reminds us, understanding strategies of inclusion and exclusion, and the grounds upon which these are justified are central to understanding the nature of political and

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<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, Kurth(1994) in which the author argues a grand alliance of multicultural and feminist activists are undermining the cohesion of Western civilisation.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, David Campbell's study of the United States argues that its boundaries were not just reflected in, but were constituted by, US foreign policy. Foreign policy helped to constitute US identity by defining external threats, which were both strategic and moral. These were also linked to perceived threats within the community (Campbell, 1992).



moral communities (Linklater, 1990). In the context of international relations, territory has come to provide one of the most immediate and obvious sites for the drawing of boundaries. The territorial definition of community is particularly significant in the modern Western political tradition where communities are physically separated through frontier lines. The concept of political community has become intimately incorporated with the concept of territory in the modern European state system in which the state's sovereign capacity is conceptualised in relation to its exercise of control over a defined territory (Ruggie, 1993; Mount, 1997).<sup>25</sup> This has led to the expectation of a 'necessary alignment' between territory and identity which has been prominent in International Relations (Campbell, 1996:171).<sup>26</sup>

However, whilst territorial boundaries may constitute a significant dimension of the identity of communities, they present only one dimension. As Norton observes, political boundaries are also drawn in history, culture and ideology:<sup>27</sup> 'The demarcation on each of these planes constitutes one dimension of political identity' (Norton, 1988:4). One of the most significant features of post-Cold War international politics has been the rediscovery of the importance of other dimensions of identity, such as ethnicity, language and religion. The contribution of such elements of identity to political communities to a large extent had been overshadowed by the ideological geopolitics of the Cold War.

In the twentieth century, the nation-state has been a potent political symbol and goal, its legitimacy enhanced by the broad appeal of the idea of self-determination.

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<sup>25</sup> See also Anderson(1991) and Said(1978) on the significance of mapping and census making in the European conceptualisation of space. See Springborg(1994) on the historic links between the concepts of territoriality, property and the Western state.

<sup>26</sup> This 'necessary alignment' is under challenge. For instance, the relationship between identity and territory is challenged by the identities of migrants, refugees and transnational communities as well as alternative claims on identity such as ethnic identities within existing state communities. See Alker & Shapiro(1996); Krause & Renwick(1996) and Mount(1997) for further discussion of the challenges which shifting perceptions of territory and identity present to International Relations.

<sup>27</sup> Issues of class and gender are also important dimensions of political identity, although their impact on world politics has often been neglected by International Relations. Notable exceptions to this neglect include the growing body of literature on feminist International Relations by authors such as Cynthia Enloe, Spike Peterson, Jan Jindy Pettman, Ann Tickner and Christine Sylvester, and on class, work by structural theorists, for example Immanuel Wallerstein.

Although many national identities highlight a dominant race, language or religion, in practice, very few states are homogeneous (Walker Connor, 1978; Dittmer & Kim, 1993:10). Nonetheless, the heterogeneity of most states has not weakened the power of national identity as a political force in international relations. This suggests that the identity of a national community is built around something more than seemingly objective criteria such as territorial boundaries, language or race. There must be some sense of commitment by members to the community and a need for a form of acceptance as a member of the community.<sup>28</sup> Dittmer & Kim(1993) suggest that to understand the constitution of a community's identity it is necessary to go beyond purely analytical concepts of identity which describe the 'objective' features of a community to understand the subjective qualities which give the community substance. In their discussion of national identity, they seek to explore more fully the networks and relationships that attach the individual to the community and the values it is perceived to represent. These attachments can be powerful, in many cases persuading individuals to make enormous sacrifices for the perceived good of the community. As Anderson observes, in the last two centuries, millions have been willing to die for the imagined communities of nations (Anderson 1991:7). In the twentieth century, many have also sacrificed themselves for concepts such as freedom as much as for a specific territorial homeland.<sup>29</sup> The bonds of attachment which can inspire such actions must be strong and deeply rooted.

As noted above, Benedict Anderson explores the way in which language can develop the attachments of national identity. He notes that using the vocabulary of kinship and home, idioms to which all people feel a natural attachment, the language of nationalism is able to evoke self-sacrificing love (Anderson, 1991:143-

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<sup>28</sup> Doty(1993) argues race is a category or identity which may be imposed by outside, but that a community so defined can build up within it a sense of its own identity, for instance belonging, shared purpose. In discussing the distinction between an ethnic category and an ethnic community, Davies(1996) observes that a community is distinguished by not only by objective criteria, but also by a subjective consciousness of belonging to a community.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, in the conflicts of the twentieth century, large numbers of troops have been sent from abroad sent to fight in far-off continents. Australians and New Zealanders fought in Europe, Americans to Southeast Asia, Cubans to Africa in conflicts tied as much to ideologies as to threats to territorial integrity of the homeland.

5). Dittmer & Kim stress the relationships established via common symbols, and shared myths and histories in constituting communal identity. In this, they seek to capture what makes the identity dynamic.<sup>30</sup> This suggests looking not only at the borders which delimit a community, but also at the channels through which individuals relate to the identity of the collective, and through which this identity is regenerated. Dittmer & Kim explore

...the ensemble of symbols collected to represent the principles on which the group was founded and on the basis of which its members have contracted to live together. (1993:17)

This helps to explain how the community is constituted on an intersubjective basis by its members, its leaders, its narrators and scholars.

Symbols, myths and histories can legitimise a community's rules and goals; help to define its membership and provide a vehicle to perpetuate it beyond the lifetime of its individual members as myths and symbols are passed from generation to generation, and to new members (Norton 1988:5). If we conceive of symbols as also incorporating concepts, we can see how the myths and symbols of a community can contribute to its normative bonds. In the West we might consider the French Revolution, the American Declaration of Independence or the erection and fall of the Berlin Wall as foundational and powerful symbols of traditions of individualism, freedom and equality. In Australia, the Anzac tradition provides a powerful myth of sacrifice for the good of the community. The first landing of man on the moon remains a potent symbol of progress and the power of the rational, scientific mind. The examination of such symbolic dimensions helps to elucidate the qualities which provide a community with cohesion and continuity.

### ***The Role of Histories and Representations***

Community identities are treated here as dynamic and ongoing. Histories provide a way in which changing identities can be represented. Drawing on the work of Erik Erikson, Bloom observes that a person's identity continues to evolve from youth to

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, they describe national identity as 'an ongoing process or journey rather than a fixed set of boundaries, a relationship rather than a free-standing entity or attribute' (1993:13).

old age (1990:35). Similarly, the identity of the collective evolves with changing historical circumstances. All political communities are subject to challenge and change, as shifting social and political circumstances bring about new identifications and loyalties, sometimes superimposed on old loyalties and identities (Bloom, 1990:63).<sup>31</sup> The identity of a community must be to some degree flexible if the community is to remain relevant to changing historical circumstances. Without this flexibility, a community may become irrelevant to its members, perhaps even redundant. In this sense a community's identity is dynamic; it is continually being reconstituted.

How, then, does this identity maintain both continuity and dynamism? Norton assists in understanding how this is achieved through representation. She argues that the seemingly established order is constantly in flux. People both preserve the collective identity and bind themselves to it through material embodiments - constitutions, institutions, documents, monuments. These materialities she describes as *representations*. A representation (or a *re*-presentation) preserves things in their absence, but in repeating things, it also reinterprets them:

...each representation, occurring in a different context, attaches additional associations to the act or individuals that is recalled, and disguises the significance of once meaningful attributes. Thus representation shows itself to be at once endlessly repetitive and ever changing. (Norton, 1988:97)

Norton's concept of representations in some ways parallels Dittmer & Kim's notion of symbols and myths. These authors focus our attention on the significance of conceptual icons which articulate the norms and goals of the community. They provide a focus for its identity and a vehicle for its perpetuation, a means by which the identity of the community can maintain a sense of continuity. As the interpretations of these myths and symbols, these representations evolve to meet changing historical circumstances, so does the constitution of the community. This

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<sup>31</sup> As Ferguson & Mansbach point out, no polity remains unchallenged or unchanged for ever; but the pull of old loyalties can remain powerful. In such cases, polities must co-opt old loyalties, memories and identities or risk these becoming the basis of rival political associations or faiths (1996:36).

allows the community to be re-constituted in relation to the context in which it occurs.

The concept of 'representation' is also critical to the work of post-modern authors such as Michael Shapiro. For Shapiro(1989), our understanding of the world is mediated by meanings and values imposed not only by our immediate consciousness, but by various 'reality making scripts' inherited from surrounding cultural and linguistic conditions. It is influenced by interpretations shaped by our cultural context. Shapiro emphasises representations as not just reflecting, but also constituting the social world, imparting meaning and value to things (Shapiro, 1988). Representations, then, contribute to the production of knowledge and identity. They circulate through discursive practices, become naturalised, and acquire the air of 'truth' (Doty, 1996). These 'truths' become part of our social reality and shape our understanding of the past.

Farrands(1996) observes that all societies, traditional and modern have 'foundational myths'; incidents or situations which explain their origins and character. Campbell(1996:165) similarly refers to *coup de force*, performative acts or events which provide a critical sense of foundation to the community's identity. The French Revolution could be seen as such a foundational myth in conceptualisations of the modern West; the Chinese Long March fulfilled a similar role in modern Chinese society (Farrands, 1996).

The significance of foundational myths in interpreting a society's past highlights the importance of history in shaping and maintaining political identities for the present.<sup>32</sup> History, argues Farrands, is central to modern identity: 'Our identity is part of our history, defined by our sense of history, and validated by history' (Farrands, 1996:6). A sense of common history, shared by the members of the community, helps to provide or explain continuity in its symbols and

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<sup>32</sup> Walker also points to the importance of 'myths of origins' for academic discourses. These, in effect, are particular readings of history and texts which implicitly affirm the assumptions of the modern discipline. In the case of International Relations, for instance, this relates to readings of the emergence of the interstate relations: 'By identifying when interstate relations began, and providing a sharp contrast with what came before, these stories offer a powerful account of what interstate politics must be, given what it has always been since the presumed beginning' (1989:170).

representations; it can enhance the cohesion of the community and its sense of identity. History links the community of the present with that of the past:

The remaking of public myth, of the history of the people, which necessarily accompanies each representation of national identity, reconstitutes not only the living but the dead. It reveals the representation that invests the reformed community with a history distinct from that of its predecessors. It denies the boundaries that divide the living and the dead, making them, at least in the understanding of the people, one. The remaking of history expresses an affirmation of continuous identity, transcending material conditions. (Norton, 1988:112)

History, then, functions to explain the identity of the community, and to justify its current constitution and conduct. History is annunciated in many locations in a society. It can be produced through official histories authorised by administrations, through academic discourses and the school system - a critical site for the reproduction of historical memory. History is also produced and reproduced through the media, and discussions in community, family and peer groups. The creating and reproduction of histories is not a simple process. Histories can be highly contested, particularly when interpretations of the past are at odds.<sup>33</sup> Even the most comprehensive of historical texts is, of necessity, selective; all histories are ultimately interpretations.<sup>34</sup>

In a sense, history is as much about forgetting as remembering in that our perception of the past is influenced by what is left out as well as by what is

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<sup>33</sup> Consider, for instance, the ongoing debate in Australia about the history of white settlement. While many argue that the history of Australia has for too long ignored the dispossession and extreme suffering experienced by the aboriginal inhabitants as a result of white settlement, others, including, Prime Minister Howard, have expressed a sense of resentment at what they see as the 'black armband' interpretation of Australian history which takes into account the aboriginal experience. Another vivid example of history as a site of contest was the dispute which arose in 1994 over the Smithsonian's exhibition *The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* in Washington D.C. Those who opposed the exhibition included the Air Force Association, the American Legion and various Congressional members. They argued that the exhibition unfairly represented the American side too harshly and as aggressors, and the Japanese too sympathetically and as victims. They succeeded in having the exhibition, which opened in January 1995, radically scaled down. See Linethal(1995), Sherry(1995) and Fenrich(1995).

<sup>34</sup> The reasons for this may range from a conscious decision to manipulate the presentation of a certain era or event to the fact that only certain of the numerous events which occur even in one period may be recorded or remembered. There are, and always will, be many potential histories of any one event. See E.H. Carr's 'A Historian and His Facts'(1961), for a discussion of facts, evaluations and interpretations.

included in our histories.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, our perception or sense of history may not always be accurate. For example, traditions which may appear ancient might, in fact, be recent innovations. Nation-states, Hobsbawm reminds us, are a relatively recent innovation, but often seek to portray themselves as ancient and natural political communities rather than modern constructs (Hobsbawm, 1983:7).<sup>36</sup>

Invented traditions, and possibly traditions in general, build upon particular interpretations of a community's history, serving to enhance the cohesion and legitimacy of existing structures by drawing on the community's sense of the past: 'All invented traditions use history as a legitimiser of action and cement group cohesion' (Hobsbawm, 1983:12). The work of Hobsbawm and his colleagues serves to demonstrate the significance of traditions in enhancing authority and group cohesion. It also highlights the importance of establishing links with the past, of a sense of historical continuity in the constitution and sustaining of community and its structures. Legitimacy is often, although not exclusively, drawn from a sense of continuity with the past.

The past can be used to provide a sense of authenticity for the present. Lawson, for instance, argues that ethno-nationalism has often used the idea of the ethnos as the natural and authentic community forming the basis for the 'authentic' state (1995:10). Strong links may be made between claims to sovereignty and collective memories of past injustices, such as Serbian suffering under Turkish rule or the dispossession, famine and migration which the Irish suffered under British authority (Lawson, 1995). Particular interpretations of events in history, of culture and tradition can be used to support and authenticate political institutions, or as Lawson argues, the positions of particular elites (1996; 1997). At the same time,

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<sup>35</sup> See, for instance, Martin Bernal's controversial *Black Athena* (1987) in which Bernal argues that nineteenth century European archaeology and history effectively wrote out the significant ties which ancient Greek society had with African society. Bernal suggests that attitudes to race underlay this selective reading of the history of the society which was seen as the antecedent to the modern Western. Or consider Aimé Césaire's observation that Europe's rejection of the barbarity of Hitler's regime neglected, or forgot, the parallel incidents of European barbarism which were tolerated when inflicted on Europe's colonial subjects (cited in Shapiro, 1996:xix).

<sup>36</sup> The functions of such traditions are as interesting as their origins. Hobsbawm cites three general types of invented tradition: those which seek to establish or symbolise social cohesion; those establishing or legitimising authority; and those whose purpose is socialisation, to inculcate beliefs, values or conventions of behaviour (Hobsbawm, 1983:9).

this can delegitimise alternative readings of history or alienate opposition by casting it as somehow unauthentic or foreign.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, history can be used to reinforce, rather than examine claims to authority.

History can be used to provide a sense of cohesion in a community by reaffirming a shared identity. The role of history in the process of differentiation and identity formation can be most obvious in times of flux, when communities are losing their cohesion and identities are in the process of re-inscription. Such periods can see the intensification of a sense of identity which may previously have been weak or less relevant to political and social life.<sup>38</sup>

History, tradition and culture, in enhancing the sense of solidarity within the community, can also alienate and exclude those who do not conform to the authorised identity. Members of the community can become 'strangers'. Defining the stranger can be a political and a violent process with claims to authenticity of one identity displacing or dominating others. Campbell speaks of the violent deployment of history in the present as a means of defining political struggle and in support of contemporary political goals (Campbell, 1996:174). For example, in the case of Yugoslavia, intellectuals have been accused of feeding the process of fragmentation by promoting memories of ancient conflicts, ancient divisions which glorified the self and stereotyped the other (Job, 1993; Campbell, 1996:174).<sup>39</sup> Whilst this may have enhanced a sense of Serbian or Croatian solidarity in the post-Cold War environment, it simultaneously promoted the exclusion of ethnic groups from what had been a heterogeneous, if not always united, political communities. Representations of history are, then, a critical element in process of differentiation.

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<sup>37</sup> See Lawson's discussion of the political dimensions of 'Asian' as opposed to 'Western' values debate in Lawson(1996).

<sup>38</sup> For instance, ethnic, racial and religious identities may become paramount in dividing communities which had previously co-existed with heterogeneity when other forms of political identity held primacy, such as in Rwanda in 1994 or during the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s. This is not to deny the prior presence of difference, but difference then did not lead to the violent exclusion of the other from the polity.

<sup>39</sup> As Lawson reminds us, the political deployment of culture in processes of differentiation can lead to a reductionist, static representation of cultures as incommensurable (Lawson, 1996).



## *A Framework for Analysis*

The growing body of literature on the politics of identity and representation therefore offers a rich source of ideas and insights for exploring conceptions of the West as a civilisation identity. It suggests that while important boundaries are drawn around communities through processes of differentiation, community identities are also constituted by perceptions of shared norms and beliefs. Recent works on identity politics encourages the consideration of identities as dynamic, constituted and reconstituted in response to issues and circumstances. Finally, this literature encourages the consideration of how community identities are sustained through history and tactics of representation which provide continuity between past, present and future, but also allow for adjustment as perceptions of the nature and role of the community shift over time.

Relating these insights to exploration of the West as a civilisational identity suggests that a framework for analysis should acknowledge and investigate the boundaries conceived as differentiating the West from other communities. However, it should also investigate perceptions of shared norms and beliefs and their expression through institutions which provide the subjective dimension of a community, giving it substance and character and enhancing its cohesion. It also suggests the need for awareness of how history and representations have been employed to explain the community's past and present. Finally, it suggests that civilisational identities, like other identities, should be treated as dynamic and subject to reconstitution under the influence of the context in which they are being conceived of and articulated. One of the critical contexts within which the West is conceptualised is that of its relationship to other civilisational identities. Conceptions of the West occur within the broader context of perceptions of the nature of civilisational interaction. These are discussed here as constituting perceptions of the cultural world order.

This study acknowledges and examines the complexity and contextuality of conceptions of the West by adopting a comparative approach, discussing its conception by a range of selected authors. In order to examine the influences which may have shaped the perspectives of these authors, the study first outlines the

broad historical and intellectual context in which they worked. It does not argue that these influences are in themselves sufficient to explain particular approaches, but it suggests that they do help us to understand the interpretations and priorities which can be identified in their respective conceptions of the West and cultural world order. The study then identifies in these works key underlying assumptions about the nature of civilisations and their interaction, and the shape of the cultural world order. These assumptions provide the cultural context for conceptions of the nature of the West, of its role in the cultural world order, and its relationship with other civilisational identities.

The study then moves to focus on how each of these authors conceptualises the tangible and normative boundaries of the West. Four 'objective' boundaries have been selected which have the potential to express significant, visible dimensions of the West's identity. The first selected is perhaps the most obvious one of territory. The study examines the extent to which each conception identifies the West as a specific territorial location, but it further outlines the role which geography, or the relationship to territory, plays in defining the West. The second is the critical boundary of religion. Religion is widely understood as a significant and powerful feature of community identity. This is no less the case with the West where Christianity is commonly perceived as providing both spiritual and political foundations for the modern West. The study therefore examines the way, and extent to which, religion is perceived as defining and differentiating the West in each case. Race is also a powerful dimension of community identity, although one which has often been neglected in discussions of international politics. The study explores the extent to which racial identity, or its management, features in these conceptions of the West and its relations with other civilisational identities. The fourth boundary considered is that of power. One of the most common features of conceptions of the West is the perception of it as a community distinguished by its exercise of unprecedented power. The study examines how this power is conceptualised, exploring the extent to which it is perceived not only as material capacity, but also as the exercise of influence in the international system through mechanisms such as international institutions, law and culture. It also examines whether Western power is seen as declining or increasing.

The study then proceeds to explore perceptions of the more subjective dimensions of the West in examining interpretations of its norms and institutions. It analyses the key norms taken to characterise and distinguish the West, investigating how these help to frame analysis of the West's interaction with other civilisational identities. Similarly, it examines the key institutions assumed as characterising the West.<sup>40</sup> Again, the study investigates the relationship between perceptions of Western institutions and their role or impact on relations with other civilisational identities.

Finally, keeping in mind the boundaries perceived as defining the West in each case, the study examines the way in which interaction between the West and non-West is understood and interpreted, both historically and in the present. It examines the role which the West is perceived as playing and the possibilities envisaged for interaction as shaped by perceptions of the cultural world order.

Starting from the premise that the West may be usefully conceived of as an imagined community and a civilisational identity, this framework explores various dimensions of the West's boundaries, its norms, and the way in which the history of the West and its interactions with other civilisational identities are perceived within the broader context of the cultural world order. It compares how the selected authors conceptualise the West and seeks to relate variations in these conceptions to the impact of different influences and contexts on the authors, and to their perceptions of cultural world order. In this way, the framework seeks to give some substance to the complexity and contextuality of the West.

This framework provides a mechanism for addressing the absence in International Relations theory of reflection on the conception of the nature and role of the West in world politics. Furthermore, it locates conceptions of the West in relation to broader assumptions about cultural world order which are an important, if often

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<sup>40</sup> The term institutions is used here in the sense in which it was defined by Hedley Bull as 'a set of habits or practices shaped towards the realisation of a common goal' (Bull, 1977a:74).

understated, dimension of our image of world politics and of the possibilities for interaction between peoples.

## *Chapter Three*

### *Faust in the Twilight: Conceptions of the West in Oswald Spengler*

'Nineteen-nineteen was the "Spengler year." Everyone seemed to be reading him; everyone was wondering just who he was.' Within eight years of its publication in 1919, sales of *The Decline of the West* had reached one hundred thousand (Hughes, 1952:89). Why did this weighty and complex tome excite so much interest in the years following the First World War?<sup>1</sup> One of its attractions was that it purported to explain the turbulent past; but it also claimed to forecast the future of the West.

Oswald Spengler's approach was radical in a number of respects. He had written a history of civilisation in which the West appeared as one of many civilisations, departing from the more conventional contemporary assumption of the West and civilisation as virtually synonymous.<sup>2</sup> Spengler views the cultural world order as comprising multiple, organic, self-contained and essentially incommensurable civilisations. His conception of the West is infused with the sense of the organic development of society as an integrated whole within the framework of an essentially self-contained history. Furthermore, his prognosis for the West is a gloomy one of decline and disintegration. This 'Faustian' civilisation is seen as entering the twilight of its life-cycle. This was a significant departure from conventional assumptions of the innate progressiveness of the West; but it was one which spoke to the insecurities of the era.

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<sup>1</sup> As William Dray(1980) and Werner Dannhauser(1995) note, there was also a renewed burst of interest in Spengler's work in the period following World War II, a period in which people sought once again to understand a terrible period of devastation and destruction.

<sup>2</sup> As William McNeill points out, the majority of nineteenth century European scholars effectively denied the historical significance of eras and places that failed to contribute to 'Progress' 'and regardless of whether 'Progress' was defined in terms of truth, freedom, power or wealth, it remained always a European monopoly' (McNeill, 1989:164).

Spengler's work provides a remarkable conception of the West as a civilisational identity moving towards decay and demagoguery, which even today is unsettling. However, the ideas used to construct this conception are not unprecedented. Spengler drew on influences and traditions which represent important elements of Western culture and thinking, including views which are anti-liberal and post or anti-modern.

This chapter comments upon the ideas expressed in Spengler's key work, *The Decline of the West*,<sup>3</sup> but also refers to some of his shorter works. These include the essay 'Prussianism and Socialism' (1967), published between the first and second volumes of the *Decline*; and two works published towards the end of his life, *Man and Technics* (1932) and Spengler's last book *The Hour of Decision* (1934). Each of these works develops themes and ideas touched upon in the *Decline*. They illustrate one perspective of the West at a time of great flux in European and world history. At the same time, Spengler's West is deeply embedded in a broader, complex conception of civilisational history

### ***Spengler's Era and Influences***

*The Decline of the West* provided a grand, panoramic and ultimately pessimistic vision of a gradually decaying Civilisation.<sup>4</sup> His conception was moulded both by his own perceptions and experiences, and the intellectual and political currents of the time. Although Spengler was not necessarily typical of intellectuals in his era, his work drew on an important intellectual tradition which was suspicious, if not pessimistic, with regard to the prospects and consequences of development, and the increased sophistication of Western civilisation. As an individual, Spengler was lonesome, moody, shy and poor in health. It has been suggested that Spengler's pessimistic temperament and keen sense of tragedy enabled him to illuminate a dimension of man's past as few other historians had done (Fischer, 1989:72).

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<sup>3</sup> The first volume of *The Decline of the West* was completed in 1917; the second, although substantially drafted, was not published until 1922. A revised and definitive version of volume 1 was published in 1923.

<sup>4</sup> The capitalisation of Culture and Civilisation is used in this chapter to conform with Spengler's usage of the terms, as translated by Atkinson.

Spengler (1880-1936) lived during an era of transition and growing tension. He was born into a Germany recently unified, a country described as a hybrid society which saw the persistence of feudal institutions within a context of modern capitalism and machine technology, a powerful community still somewhat unsure of how to achieve its role as a force in the world (Fischer, 1989; Tuchman, 1966). The genesis of the idea for the *Decline* came to Spengler during 1911. He viewed the Moroccan crisis of that year, which brought Germany to the brink of war with France, as a portent of the catastrophe to come. In international politics this was an era of arms races, imperialist clashes and developing blocs of alliances. It was also an era of growing militancy and militarism (Hughes, 1952:15). Spengler's sense of pessimism and tragedy was enhanced by the personal poverty and hardship which he experienced during the course of World War One when he was writing *The Decline of the West*. He wrote during an era of trauma and change for Germany. Following defeat and humiliation in the World War 1, Germany experienced a period of turbulence under the Weimar Republic. This political system struggled with the extreme economic pressures of hyperinflation, reparations and depression in the 1920's, and eventually crumbled under the pressure of the rise of extremist political groups which brought the National Socialists to power in 1933. Spengler's work is infused with a sense of shame and dismay at the fate of Germany after the war. There is a palpable sense of betrayal which Spengler places on the shoulders of the German liberals and intellectuals whose influence he believed had undermined the German nation. There is also a sense of threat emanating from the challenge of revolutionary Russia and the increasing political and economic vitality of the colonial peoples.<sup>5</sup>

Intellectually, this was also an era of uncertainty. Confidence in Western liberal ideas of rationalism and progress was challenged by the scepticism of authors and philosophers such as Georges Sorel, Vilfredo Pareto and Friedrich Nietzsche. In

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<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, 'Prussianism and Socialism' (Spengler, 1967), first published in 1919. In this work, as elsewhere, Spengler demonstrated an intense anti-intellectualism, a resentment at the men of ideas who he felt were removed from the more brutal grist and mill of life and power politics, and were consequently the pawns of more powerful forces such as big business. Spengler's anti-intellectualism is somewhat ironic given that he himself spent his life devoted to study and writing and did not hold an occupation outside of the literary and academic fields.

the nineteenth century, Alexis De Tocqueville and Jacob Burckhardt had raised questions about the wisdom and future of democracy, Burckhardt fearing the manipulation of the masses by tyrants. Nietzsche took Burckhardt's criticisms of the decadence of contemporary Western society further, forecasting that a new elite, Nietzsche's supermen, would sweep away the decadence of the nineteenth century bourgeois society, introducing new values of barbaric simplicity. Scholars such as Freud and Pareto proposed 'intuitive theories' of human action, arguing that the basis of human action might lie beyond the level of logical thinking (Hughes, 1952:19-25). Such ideas challenged the assumption of man as an innately rational actor, implying human action may be driven by deeper impulses.

In intellectual currents of this era, there was a prevalent view that struggle and conflict were forces of growth and renewal. The idea of struggle was integral to both the ideologies of Darwinism and Marxism and was an important element of *realpolitik* in the political arena:

There was a profound conviction among statesmen and thinkers, supported by the evidence of contemporary science, that nations were engaged in a ceaseless struggle for survival, and that only the strongest nations stood the chance of emerging victoriously from it. (Fischer, 1989:38)

Spengler's images of the productive impact of struggle and his pessimism with regard to the future course of Western civilisation reflect these trends.<sup>6</sup> However, his opposition to rationalism and scientific historical approaches led him to reject Darwinism as based on superficial causality (*Decline*:231).

Within Germany, some elements of the intellectual community sought to blend the old cosmopolitan and liberal ideas of the Romantics with the '*Realpolitik*' of the Germany in the machine age (Fischer, 1989:42-4). Spengler demonstrates the influence of both of these trends but he stands outside the German historicist tradition which encompasses Hegel, Marx and Weber (Farrenkopf, 1993:391-2). His anti-liberal and anti-modern views reject the faith in reason and progress found

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Howard warns against the tendency to overestimate the extent to which ideas such as Social Darwinism were subscribed to by the general public, although they were widely discussed in intellectual circles. However, he himself comments that in pre-World War I era, wars were probably seen not so much as a terrible evils but necessary struggles to be fought and won (1987:15).



in these authors, as well as the belief in continuities in history found in Hegel, for instance.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Spengler can be located within a tradition of pessimistic thought which is represented in the German context by Nietzsche (Farrenkopf, 1993:391; Springborg, 1993:77).<sup>8</sup>

Spengler's work reflects the influence of his training as a classical scholar. For instance, his conceptualisation of history as a cyclical process involving organic cultures demonstrates both his rejection of progressive thought and the influence of classical thinkers. Both Aristotle and Heraclitus had applied the idea of life-cycles as observed in nature to human society. This facilitated the notion of viewing human society as passing through stages of spring, summer, autumn and winter, or youth, maturity and old age. Heraclitus further observed not only the cyclicity of nature but also its transience.<sup>9</sup> Spengler knew the work of Heraclitus well, having written his doctoral thesis on the philosopher. His own work applied this concept of the natural order of things to human history. Spengler viewed cultures as progressing through a cyclical life span while constantly engaged in a process of self-transformation.

Cyclical conceptions of history were not confined to the classical scholars and can also be found in the work of Machiavelli and Vico. They were also adopted by the Romantic movement in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century. In contrast to traditional Christian and secularised Enlightenment views of history in terms of the linear progression of mankind, the Romantic movement preferred to investigate the unique development of distinct cultures which grew like biological organisms. Spengler echoed the Romantics in his presentation of history as the study of an organic society, studying the spirit or *Geist* of that community as it was expressed through all aspects of society, including art, architecture and philosophy.

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<sup>7</sup> Dannhauser describes Hegel as Spengler's 'silent enemy' (Dannhauser, 1995:123).

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Springborg(1993) includes Spengler's work amongst a body of post-modern criticism which had antecedents in a tradition of critique of civilisation with roots in Stoic thought and developed in the Enlightenment by authors such as Rousseau, Diderot and Adam Smith.

<sup>9</sup> Transferring his theories on nature to human affairs, Heraclitus saw human society as proceeding through a series of cycles with strife as the motive force of change. Fischer suggests Spengler extrapolated Heraclitus' idea of struggle as a generative force (Fischer, 1989:86).

One of Spengler's chief influences and a key proponent of the Romantic movement was Goethe. His work provided Spengler with the principal character in his conceptualisation of the West - Faustian man. Spengler maintained that he further derived his methodology from Goethe, taking from him a preference for deep contemplation of a subject rather than scientific analysis:

...Spengler found in Goethe's theories (of natural science) the model for his own 'morphological' method. He admired Goethe's practice of contemplating natural phenomena in their total configuration. Like him, Spengler argued, the historian should seek out the *Urphänomen*, or whole prime phenomenon, that would reveal the spiritual depths of a whole civilisation. (Hughes, 1952:59)

The second key influence whom Spengler acknowledged was Nietzsche.<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche's influence was substantial, although there were points on which Spengler differed from his predecessor.<sup>11</sup> Nietzsche also subscribed to a cyclical view of history believing that contemporary Western civilisation was on the verge of major change. The force which for Nietzsche impelled change was a 'will to power'. This is a central theme in Spengler's *Decline*. Like Nietzsche, Spengler believed that politics was essentially driven and governed by elites rather than the masses.<sup>12</sup>

Spengler's perceptions of the West and of cultural world order were carved from this compilation of morphological conceptualisations. His pessimism with regard to the fate of the West is in no small part founded on his perception of civilisational histories as natural process of growth and decay. His perception of struggle and the

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<sup>10</sup> In the 1923 Preface of *The Decline*, Spengler acknowledged those scholars 'to whom I owe practically everything: Goethe and Nietzsche: Goethe gave me method, Nietzsche the questioning faculty' (*Decline*:xxxi; Dannhauser, 1995:127).

<sup>11</sup> H. Stuart Hughes argues that Nietzsche attached greater importance to the role of the individual as the supreme moral value. Spengler, in contrast, subordinated the individual to the working of the greater historical process and attached greater importance to the role of the state, to which Nietzsche had expressed hostility. Spengler also criticised Nietzsche's limited perspective in focusing primarily on Western Civilisation in his philosophy (*Decline*:19; Hughes, 1952:62).

<sup>12</sup> Other concepts which Spengler appears to have interpreted from Nietzsche's work include the idea of history as universal symbolism; the quest for the essential tempo, or melody of a particular culture; a non-biological view of race; and the perception of Hellenic civilisation as Apollonian. However, in Nietzsche, Apollonian man was balanced out by the slightly wilder character of Dionysian man, giving Nietzsche's conceptualisation of Hellenic society greater breadth. See Klaus Fischer(1989:105) and H. Stuart Hughes(1952:62).

will to power as the dynamic forces which drive cultures derived in part from his readings of authors such as Heraclitus and Nietzsche, but were no doubt reinforced by the intellectual and political environment during which he wrote. These forces helped to shape Spengler's distinctive understanding of the role of civilisations in history and politics.

### *Conceptions of Civilisations*

Civilisations stood at the heart of Spengler's complex historical philosophy. As John Farrenkopf notes, he played a path-breaking role in choosing to focus on civilisations rather than on nations or peoples as had been conventional in the nineteenth century historiography.<sup>13</sup> As a classical scholar, he was aware of the significance and vulnerability of civilisations in history (Farrenkopf, 1993:393-4). His conception of civilisations is characterised first and foremost by a sense of their plurality, and secondly by their impermanence.

Spengler distinguished between Culture and Civilisation. He saw Cultures as single organic entities:

The high Culture ... is the waking-being of a single huge organism which makes not only custom, myths, technique and art, but the very peoples and classes incorporated in itself the vessels of one single form-language and one single history. (*Decline*:234)<sup>14</sup>

Like any other organic being, they enter into a life-cycle which brings them through periods of growth, blossoming, maturity and decline - or childhood, youth, maturity and old-age.<sup>15</sup> This process lasted, on average, a thousand years. The transition from a culture at its height to the processes of decline mark the transition from Culture to Civilisation:

The aim once attained - the idea, the entire content of inner possibilities, fulfilled and made externally actual - the Culture

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<sup>13</sup> In the *Decline of the West*, Spengler identifies eight High Cultures: the Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, Classical or Hellenic, Magian or Arabian, Mexican, Western and Russian.

<sup>14</sup> The edition referred to in this chapter will be the abridged edition of *The Decline of the West* listed in the bibliography except in the cases where the actual volume number is cited.

<sup>15</sup> See Tarnas's discussion of the Romantic and Enlightenment traditions in Western thought in which he notes the Romantic vision of the world as a unitary organism rather than as an atomistic machine (1991:366-94).

suddenly hardens, it mortifies, its blood congeals, its force breaks down, and it becomes a Civilisation. (*Decline*:74)

Civilisation is the period when the soul of a Culture has exhausted its truly creative potential, reached fulfilment and becomes mummified in the culture and society of the metropolis.

The distinctions which Spengler draws between Culture and Civilisation have precedents in German literature. H. Stuart Hughes credits Nietzsche with the invention of the distinction, later popularised by Thomas Mann's work *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man* (Hughes, 1952:72). However, Norbert Elias notes that Kant distinguished between 'civilisation', interpreted as a form of propriety or outward behaviour, in contrast to 'culture', conveying a sense of accomplishment. In contemporary usage, the distinction between the term *Zivilization* and *Kultur* retained this distinction. Elias argues that *Zivilization* was a term which meant something useful, but superficial and second rank in comparison to *Kultur* (Elias, 1978:4).<sup>16</sup> Spengler's employment of the terms similarly tends to privilege Culture as a more creative and valuable phase of social existence.

Spengler advocated a morphological approach to the study of these organic entities rather than a systematic one.<sup>17</sup> To him, the history of mankind was the history of the separate development and decline of various Cultures and Civilisations. Cultures may intersect and effect one another. However, their development is not interdependent. Cultures were independent entities and mutually incomprehensible (Hughes, 1952:72). Pursuant to this thesis, Spengler set out to demonstrate that all aspects of a Culture are shaped by the character and dynamic of the Culture rather

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<sup>16</sup> The concept of *Kultur*, Elias argued, refers essentially to intellectual, artistic and philosophical facts. It relates more to the achievements or accomplishments of an individual. In broader terms, he argued that *Zivilization* tends to emphasise common qualities between human beings and minimise differences. In contrast, the concept of *Kultur* stresses the particular identities of groups. Elias noted that the term *Kultur* took on a new meaning in Germany in 1919 and the preceding years, partly because a war was waged against Germany in the name of civilisation. Spengler's use of this distinction reflects his attachment to the term *Kultur* which Elias saw was part of Germany's rebuilding of its self-image in the post war world (Elias, 1978:5-8). See Appendix for a fuller discussion of the term 'civilisation'.

<sup>17</sup> A morphological approach may be defined as the application to history of the biologist's concept of living form. However, as noted above, Spengler was not an evolutionist. He categorically rejected all shreds of Darwinism which he defined as 'the systematic natural science based on causality' (*Decline*:72).

than by a universal system of progression. Each Culture was perceived to have its own unique soul. The soul shapes a Culture's world view, its view of history and of nature. The uniqueness of each Culture is reflected in every aspect of its societies:

Cultures, peoples, languages, truths, gods, landscapes bloom and age as the oaks and pines, the blossoms twigs and leaves, but there is no ageing 'Mankind'. Each Culture has its own new possibilities of self-expression which arise, ripen, decay and never return. There is not *one* sculpture, *one* painting, *one* mathematics, *one* physics, but many, each in its deepest essence different from the others, each limited in duration and self-contained, just as each species of plant has its peculiar blossom or fruit, its special type of growth and decline. (*Decline*:17)

Spengler's vision of history was of the cyclical life histories of independent cultures, 'separate worlds of dynamic being' (*Decline*:14). Therefore, he did not see history as a rational, linear progression of mankind. Spengler rejected teleology and the rationalistic school of history that constantly sought causality instead seeing history as more spontaneous and phenomenal: 'a picture of endless formations and transformations, of the marvellous waxing and waning of organic forms' rather than 'a sort of tapeworm industriously adding onto itself one epoch after another' (*Decline*:6, 18).<sup>18</sup>

In Spengler's conception of history, not all populations form 'peoples'. 'Culture peoples' were distinguished from primitive peoples in that they have an inner, spiritual unity which defines them as 'nations'. Underlying nations, he argued, is an 'Idea'. The pursuit of this idea forms the quest for the fulfilment of a Culture's 'Destiny'. It is the pursuit of 'Destiny' which forms 'world-history'. Thus, the foundations of a Culture as a community were as much normative as objective. Spengler was only truly interested in what he described as 'world-history'. The majority of mankind, he argued, was locked into an ahistorical cycle of life and death. Only Cultures made history (*Decline*:73, 243).

For Spengler, history was about the quest for spiritual fulfilment. Not all Cultures achieved fulfilment, some being snuffed out through contact with another

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<sup>18</sup> This may seem at odds with his morphological conceptualisation of distinct patterns in the life cycles of Civilisations. Spengler argued that, like a human being, within the confines of the natural life-span and aging process, a Culture is in charge of its own quest for fulfilment.

civilisation, as happened with Mexican Culture; others having their creative spirit stifled by the weight of an older, alien Culture, as was the case, argued Spengler, of Arabian and Russian Cultures (*Decline*:268).<sup>19</sup> Still other Cultures, having proceeded through the stages of growth and decline, lingered on long after their cultural decay as the 'scrap material' of history, as in the case of Indian and Chinese Civilisations (Dray, 1980:107). What is most significant here is the sense of the histories of Civilisations as independent. The essence of their historical experiences were derived from within, not through interaction with other Cultures. Spengler's morphological imagery described each Culture as like a seed which contains within it the vital DNA which determines its potential growth. World history becomes like a forest composed of a variety of plants. These plants may co-exist, they may compete for light and nutrition and impact upon each others growth, but they remain separate plants (Dray, 1980).

A Culture's pursuit of its 'Idea' was not perceived as a purely intellectual process, but one of action and struggle. Ideas are realised through actions not words (Spengler, 1967:70). Struggle is a critical dynamic in Spengler's reading of history. In this he echoes contemporary modes of thought with regard to the productive impact of conflict in which the stronger wins out. His work is littered with images of battle, warriors and struggles. War is for Spengler a form of creative tension, the dynamic of history. 'War is the creator of all things. All that is meaningful in the stream of life has emerged through victory and defeat' (*Decline*, 198:vol.2, 363). Countries existed for war, and only through war did a nation or ideology demonstrate superiority over another (Spengler, 1967:70; Hughes, 1952:103). Although Spengler may have rejected the Darwinist model of evolution through struggle, his own theories posit a cultural state of nature, nasty and brutish if not always short. The beast of prey appears repeatedly as a metaphor for a strong and vigorous leadership or culture. Pacifism is treated as symptomatic of weakness and decay (Spengler, 1934:225). The achievement of universal harmony, even through

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<sup>19</sup> Both of these Cultures are described as suffering the process of 'historical pseudomorphosis' in which a younger Culture is suffocated by the weight of an older alien Culture. In the case of Arabian or Magian Culture, the older civilisation was the Classical civilisation which blanketed Magian civilisation during the Hellenic era. Russian Culture was described as forced into the moulds of Western Culture and Civilisation (*Decline*: 268-74).

the hegemony of a dominant order, appears to be unattainable (Spengler, 1967:70). Spengler's overall conception of civilisational interaction differs markedly from one which sees the evolution of cultures as deriving from interaction and cross-fertilisation, or views different cultures as phases of civilisational evolution.

### ***The Boundaries of Spengler's West***

Spengler's understanding of civilisational history leads to a distinctive conception of the West. This has profound implications for the way which he interpreted the West's relationship with other civilisations. His conception of the West must be understood within the overall thesis of *The Decline*. His aim was firstly to determine the position of the contemporary West within a hypothetical organic cycle of Culture and Civilisations. Secondly, he sought to portray the West as a Culture separate from Classical antecedents. Spengler depicts Hellenic, Magian and Western Civilisations as three distinct Cultures.<sup>20</sup> As Dannhauser remarks, this is a clear rejection of the traditional Hegelian division of history into ancient, medieval and modern as a process which 'fudges' three completely different Cultures and Civilisations. Spengler saw no such continuities in world history (Dannhauser, 1995:123).

Each civilisation was for Spengler an organic unit, with its own history and life-cycle. In *The Decline of the West*, Spengler wove an integrated history of the Western culture and politics throughout his text, linking the different stages of growth to architectural styles which characterised them. Spengler's West was born with the awakening of Faustian Culture in the German plains c.1000 A.D.<sup>21</sup> During what is traditionally known as the High Middle Ages, Spengler's new Faustian culture was characterised by Christianity, the institutions of feudalism, the establishment of imperial authority and the reformed Papacy. This era reached a

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<sup>20</sup> Magian culture is a term devised by Spengler to delineate a culture of the southern Mediterranean and Arabic worlds which combined elements of Judaism, Byzantium and Islam. It had links with both the Hellenic and Western world.

<sup>21</sup> As Hughes notes, the period from the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. until the eleventh century, normally viewed as the 'early medieval' era of the West, was treated by Spengler as a twilight era in which Europe was influenced by the older Hellenic and Magian and the new indigenous spirit (Hughes, 1952:80). Hughes provides a clear synopsis of Spengler's fairly complex portrayal of the history of the West. See Hughes (1952:80-5).

stage of fulfilment in the architecture of the Gothic era, but Spengler viewed the West as reaching its pinnacle in the art, architecture and scholarship of the Baroque era.<sup>22</sup> Intellectually, it was a period of free inquiry. Politically it was a time characterised by the authority of the dynastic state. This era also saw the shift of the focus of the Culture to the cities.

The Renaissance however, represented not an era of rebirth and growth, but 'breakdowns in internal contradictions'. As Werner Dannhauser observes, it represented a rebirth of the classical spirit in a Faustian setting, an occurrence which could not be accommodated in Spengler's theory of the independence of Cultures (Dannhauser, 1995:124). Consequently, the Renaissance is treated as a counter-movement to the Gothic ideal, but one ultimately rooted in the Gothic spirit and form (*Decline*:121-5; Spengler, 1967:32). The Baroque era descended into the charm of the Rococo which for Spengler marked the development of style and form, the real creative spirit of the West beginning to ebb.<sup>23</sup>

The Enlightenment was viewed as an era of criticism and destruction as expressed through rationalism, intellectual and artistic life focusing on the great cities, and the political rise of the bourgeoisie. Philosophically, culturally and politically, the nineteenth century was the commencement of 'winter' for the West with intellectualism and money as the key forces in politics. The industrial age was recognised as greatly empowering the West and stemming from the spiritual dynamism and ingenuity of Western culture, but it is treated as a transient phase.<sup>24</sup> Spengler saw the twentieth century presaging the new era of blood and warfare, the coming of the new 'Caesars' to restore passion and traditional values to politics. The new era would be one of perpetual and total warfare for power between outstanding personalities. The great cities, or megalopoli, would continue as foci, but the cities would be beset with social problems, their intellectual and cultural

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<sup>22</sup> Spengler viewed this as an era during which art and architecture explored the limits of space and infinity in the use of form, perspective, and light and shadow.

<sup>23</sup> Although Spengler admired the styles and forms of this era expressed in the music of Mozart, the philosophy of Kant and Goethe, the 'perfection of diplomatic technique' (Hughes, 1952:82).

<sup>24</sup> As John Farrenkopf notes, Spengler does appear to revel in the achievements of Faustian culture as expressed through the technology of the industrial age, despite his lamentations for the passing of the purer, pre-industrial era (1993:399).



life essentially sterile. Spengler forecast an eventual descent into a new primitiveness for the West - an end of history.

Therefore, Spengler's aim in *The Decline of the West* was to locate the West of the epoch 1800 A.D.-2000 A.D. in the broader chronology of Western cultural history, viewed as an organic cycle. His conclusion was that this epoch corresponds to the period of transition in the West's maturation from Culture to Civilisation. The West had already reached its peak and entered into the latter half of its life-cycle, onto the path of gradual decline. Whilst Spengler predicted the onset of major wars, he did not envisage the sudden epochal destruction of the West, but its gradual decline over several generations. The West was entering its twilight or sunset years.

Spengler placed a high priority on the internal dynamic or soul of a civilisation. To him, the Western or Faustian soul was dynamic, constantly questing, seeking to command nature, to penetrate space and to explore the concept of the infinite. Spengler's conceptualisation of the West and its boundaries are deeply interwoven with the way in which he perceived the spirit of the West.

### ***Territory***

Spengler attaches great importance to the relationship between Cultures and their territories or locations, a relationship which changes as a Culture matures. Territory provides not only objective boundaries, but is also perceived as organically linked into the moulding of the community.

From the outset, Spengler established a crucial link between territory and community. For him, the Culture of a race arises out of a particular soil and is inextricably bound to it. The shape and nature of a landscape; its flora, light and atmosphere are reflected in a Culture. Populations which migrate to a new soil or homeland gradually change and become a new race.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between land and community is also seen as changing as the locus of a Culture shifts from

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<sup>25</sup> 'A race does not migrate. Men migrate, and their successive generations are born in ever-changing landscapes; but the landscape exercises a secret force upon the plant-nature in them, and eventually the race expression is completely transformed by the extinction of the old and the appearance of a new one' (*Decline*:254).

land to city. A Culture is born on the land, but as cities develop, they become the focus of the Culture. Cities grow into large cosmopoli, becoming densely populated and rigidly constructed. The cities, he implies, are necessary for the fulfilment of a Culture, but are also the catalyst of its destruction and decay. They act as the terminus of a Civilisation (*Decline*:245-52).<sup>26</sup>

These preconceptions are important to Spengler's territorial conceptualisation of the West. He sees the West as primarily a culture of north-west Europe, born in the eleventh century on the plain between the rivers Elbe and Tagus (*Decline*:97). Its character, art and architecture were shaped by the plains and forests of the brooding North and its subtle light, hardened by its difficult climate (Spengler, 1932:78).<sup>27</sup> Spengler portrays the West as blossoming in the Germanic heartland, but not solely confined to this region. He discusses the West as growing westward as it matured, shifting in its focus from the rural north to the cities of the late nineteenth century, such as New York, London, Paris and Berlin (*Decline*:253; Spengler, 1967:40).

Spengler's territorial conceptualisation of the West is striking, not only for its Germanic locus, but for what it excludes or marginalises. The Mediterranean is traditionally viewed as the source of Western culture. Yet Spengler painted the societies of the Mediterranean as on the margins. Spengler's Mediterranean appears to occupy an ambiguous position, caught between the influences of three Cultures - the Hellenic and Magian and Western. The territory of Spengler's West also explicitly excluded Russia. 'The distinction between Russia and the West', he maintained, 'cannot be drawn too sharply' (Spengler, 1967:122). Given that Russia was commonly regarded as one of the great powers of Europe at this time, its exclusion from the West would have been regarded as unusual by many (Hughes, 1952:76).<sup>28</sup> However, Spengler regarded the Westernisation which had occurred in

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<sup>26</sup> Spengler described the cosmopoli of Civilisations as 'vast, splendid, spreading in insolence. It draws within itself the being-streams of the now impotent countryside, human masses that are wafted as dunes one to another or flow like loose sand into the chinks of stone. Here money and intellect celebrate their greatest and their last triumphs. It is the most artificial, the cleverest phenomenon manifested in the light-world of human eyes' (*Decline*:379).

<sup>27</sup> He argued, for instance, that the Gothic cathedral and the complexity of organ music echo the deciduous forest of the Northern plains (*Decline*:199-200).

<sup>28</sup> Spengler may have been influenced here by the work of the Pan-Slavists who were advocating the viewing of Russia as a society distinct from Europe. For instance, in 1869 Nikolai Danilevsky

Russia from Peter the Great onward as essentially superficial. In its soul, Russia was completely alien to the West. This difference had been exacerbated by the Russian Revolution which Spengler argued, installed an Asiatic regime in Russia: 'Russia is lord of Asia. Russia is Asia' (Spengler, 1934:213; *Decline*:271). Spengler's conception of the relationship between the West and territory is therefore both powerful and unusual.

### ***Race***

Spengler's work is popularly, although often misleadingly, associated with his views on race. Race was for Spengler a 'decisive element' in life which helped shape a Culture (*Decline*:257). His references to the importance of race and 'blood' in a Culture's history are frequent. However, he treats race as a spiritual, rather than a biological category. Cultures appear to comprise various races in his conceptualisation of societies.<sup>29</sup> Consistent with his organic methodology, Spengler argued that races have roots in the landscape which they inhabit. The landscape influences and colours the body and soul of the race. However, he rejected notions of race as bred by physiological features, or racial identity as a function of blood descent. It was the strength not the purity of a race which Spengler viewed as important (Spengler, 1934:219). He dismissed physiological definitions of race as symptomatic of the heavy hand of Darwinism. The qualities which defined race were inner qualities; in particular, a sense of a common ideal or destiny - 'racial feeling'. Race was a spiritual and cultural bond between people, not a physical one:

In race there is nothing material but something cosmic and directional, the felt harmony of a Destiny, the single cadence of the march of historical Being. (*Decline*:265)

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had published a series of articles entitled *Russia and Europe: A Viewpoint on the Political Relations between the Slavic and Germano-Roman Worlds* in which he argued that European and Russian civilisations were inimical. Sketching out a thesis which preceded Spengler in describing the history of civilisations as organic and cyclical, he argued that European civilisation was on the decline and Russian in the ascendancy (De Beus, 1953:11-16). It is unlikely that Spengler had read Danilevsky's work prior to writing the first volume of the *Decline*. (It was not released in German translation until 1920.) However, it is likely that he was familiar with the ideas of the Pan-Slavists (Hughes, 1952:53).

<sup>29</sup> Whilst closely linked, race and Culture were not synonymous for Spengler, although the distinction he makes between them is not always clear.

In keeping with this understanding of race, Spengler described the racial boundaries of the West in terms of its spiritual qualities. He describes the West as comprising Faustian races, emanating from Northern Europe, first thrusting outward into the world in the Viking migrations (Spengler, 1932:81). While Spengler recognised important differences between national groups within the West, he believed they all shared the same Faustian spirit.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, Spengler distinguished the races of the West from the peoples of the Hellenic and Magian cultures of the past, and from contemporaries such as the Russian, Jewish and Arabic races.

Spengler's West is implicitly a predominantly white West. This became more explicit in his later works, where he demonstrated a growing concern with regard to tensions and rivalries between the white races of the West and the 'coloured races'.<sup>31</sup> The coloured races, Spengler believed, resented the imperialist West and were filled with a burning desire to destroy it. This included Russia, which had now removed its 'white mask' and become Asiatic 'with all its soul' (Spengler, 1934:209). In both *Man and Technics* and *The Hour of Decision* he warned that the coloured races would eventually turn against and conquer the exhausted Faustian man (Spengler, 1932; 1934; Hughes, 1952).

Although racial distinctions are critical to Spengler's schema of civilisations, this does not make him a racist in the sense of believing in a hierarchy of the races. He dismissed notions of innate racial superiority, or of there being a master race.<sup>32</sup> However, he did argue that the West was in the process of committing racial suicide through policies such as population control and the employment of medical science to sustain the weak in society, reducing the vigour and strength of the white

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<sup>30</sup> In 'Prussianism and Socialism', Spengler expanded on this theme identifying different political traditions developed from different universal ideals held amongst three nations of the West: Prussia, developing the bureaucratic service state; Britain, developing the commercial notion of imperialism; and Spain developing militant Catholicism. These three nations represented for Spengler the strongest expression of the Faustian spirit (Spengler, 1967; Hughes, 1952:107).

<sup>31</sup> The 'coloured races' included all non-white peoples living both within and outside the territory controlled by the West. Therefore it encompassed the peoples of Asia, Africa, the Americas, including the Indian and negro peoples, and Russia (Spengler, 1934:208).

<sup>32</sup> In fact, he once remarked that only racial inferiors preach racism, racial inferiors meaning mental inferiors, a remark allegedly aimed at the National Socialist Party. Quoted by Fischer (1989:76) from Spengler(*Decline*, 1928:vol. 1).

racess (Spengler, 1934:222-4). Furthermore, he argued that the last best hope for the West for resistance and rejuvenation lay in the German people, the youngest and least exhausted of the Western peoples (Spengler, 1934:225).

Race provided a crucial boundary for Spengler's West. However, it is more a spiritual and normative boundary than an objective one. The racial feeling of the West was identified as part of the Western spirit which has driven it to probe and explore to the limits of its technical and intellectual capacity.

### ***Religion***

Spengler's philosophy of culture and history was strongly relativist. Not surprisingly then, he rejected the idea that there was one universal truth: 'There are no eternal truths: Every philosophy is the expression of its own and only its own time' (*Decline*:31). It follows, therefore, that for Spengler, religion was something unique to each Culture, shaped by the spirit of that Culture. He believed that religions evolved and changed as Cultures matured, but remained integrally related to the community. Consequently, Spengler conceived of the West as characterised by unique and evolving religious traditions rather than a community participating in a universal religious experience. His conception of the religious boundaries of the West is distinctive for its Germanic focus, and for the emphasis placed on the spirit of the individual.

Disillusioned with contemporary religion, Spengler focused on German Catholic Christianity of the Gothic age as the quintessential religious expression of youthful Western Culture.<sup>33</sup> He emphasised the importance of the Latin Church of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, noting its expression in the cult of the Virgin interwoven with the equally powerful imagery of the Devil (*Decline*:330-3).

Given the historical roots of Judeo-Christian religion, it would be impossible to conceive of the West's Christian faith as without antecedents, and Spengler did acknowledge these. He discussed Western Christianity's complex interdependence with the Magian faiths out of which it arose, and traced the development of the Christian Church from an Aramaic peasant faith which had been absorbed by

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<sup>33</sup> Fischer argues that Spengler saw contemporary religions as dead rituals (Fischer, 1989:31).

Hellenic society (*Decline*:281-5). He noted the significance of the ministry of Paul in the development of a Western church which was Greek, urban and literate in its focus (*Decline*:291).<sup>34</sup> However, Spengler pointed not only to antecedents from the Hellenic and Magian Cultures, he also traced the elements which linked the Gothic church with pre-Christian paganism, and with the Faustian myths and gods of Valhalla.<sup>35</sup> Spengler saw a unity rather than a tension in the myth-making of the northern-heathen and Christian circles, conceiving the consolidation of the German hero-tales and the Arthurian legends as a similar force and movement to the flourishing of Catholic hagiology in the tenth and eleventh centuries (*Decline*:202). These elements combined in Spengler's West to give birth to a unique religion of the West.

Whilst acknowledging its antecedents, Spengler firmly distinguished the character of the Western Church from the Hellenic and Magian religions. He emphasised the monotheism of Western religion in contrast to Hellenic. Even more pronounced was the emphasis he placed on the spirit of the individual in Western Christianity. He distinguished Western Christianity from its antecedents in the nature of man's relationship with God. He portrayed Hellenic and Magian religions as essentially fatalistic. In contrast, Western man has an individual relationship with his God, a relationship within which the individual assumes some measure of responsibility. In essence, the Western church was distinguished by the participation of the free individual who chooses their fate.<sup>36</sup> The sense of Free Will was central to Spengler's concept of the Faustian soul. This soul was:

An Ego lost in Infinity, an Ego that was all force, but a force negligibly weak in an infinity of greater forces; that was all will, but a will full of fear for its freedom. (*Decline*:334)

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<sup>34</sup> In a sense, Spengler spoke of an east/west fissure in the Christian church which preceded the schisms of the fifth century and later. In discussing these schisms, Spengler argued that the Christian church essentially split into three movements which arose out of the 'landscapes' of East, West and South (*Decline*:313-5).

<sup>35</sup> He argued that the early stages, or 'springtime', of a Culture were rich with myth making. These were not the acts of primitive men, but the first formative act of spirituality (*Decline*:201).

<sup>36</sup> Spengler focused on the concepts of grace and contrition to illustrate this point. He argued in Western eyes, grace was not simply bestowed on man by the will of God, but had to be won by the individual through a voluntary act of contrition (*Decline* 300-4).

The Germanic-Catholic Church undoubtedly represented the high point of the religious identity of Spengler's West. As a Culture matures, so its form and institutions change. Spengler traced the changes in the West's religious identity with the shifts in the Faustian religion through the challenges provided by the reformation towards puritanism, described as a fanatical revival of piety which contained within it the seeds of rationalism. This in turn was followed by materialism (*Decline*:343; De Beus, 1953:28). Spengler viewed the emergence of a more secular society, governed by rationalism and materialism, as an element in the West's ultimate decline. This contrasts to the conception of the creation of a secular society as a mark of the West's progress and aspect of its strength.<sup>37</sup> Protestant faith is portrayed as a diminution of the purity of the earlier church. This stands in contrast to his contemporary, Max Weber, who related the spirit of Protestantism to the success of the West through capitalism (Weber, 1930; Farrenkopf, 1993:402).

The boundaries of religion formed a distinct element of Spengler's conception of the West. Yet once again, these were not boundaries which were objectively defined. The religion of the West was organically linked to the identity of an inner spirit of the West. Religion was a further expression of the unique soul of the West; evolution and change within Western religion were regarded as related to the maturing of the West.

### ***Power***

Spengler's concept of power was in many ways fairly abstract, containing spiritual and morphological components. Power stemmed in part from the inner spirit of a Culture; in part from the stage of growth which a Culture was experiencing. The power of the West was viewed by Spengler as unrivalled due to its status as a still growing Culture, but also to its dynamic character. The power of the West both enabled and endangered it.

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<sup>37</sup> Spengler predicted that the late phase of Civilisation would eventually stimulate a spiritual reaction in the form of a second wave of religiousness. This would be a naive religion born amongst the masses which revives new forms of old religion (*Decline*:348). In the case of the West, this would mean the rebirth of Gothic Christianity (De Beus, 1953:30-1).

Spengler conceptualised the West as the only extant Culture still in the phase of fulfilment. Other extant Cultures had either ossified or failed to achieve their potential. This naturally gave the West enormous advantages relative to other Cultures, enhanced by its dynamic character. For Spengler, the exploratory spirit of the West was demonstrated in its science, technology, art and a will to travel. He applauded the work of Spanish explorers as demonstrations of a spirit unafraid to challenge nature and explore space, pushing aside boundaries on a global scale:

The discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama extended the geographical horizon without limit, and the world-sea came into the same relation with land as that of the universe of space with earth. ... with the discovery of America, West Europe became a province in a gigantic whole. Thenceforward the history of the Western Culture has a *planetary* character. (*Decline*:174)

The Faustian soul not only inspired the physical conquest of the world around us, but also the morale of shaping that world. The Faustian ‘will to power’ is one ‘which laughs at all bounds of time and space, which indeed regards the boundless and endless as its specific target’, which seeks to mould and shape the natural and intellectual world (Spengler, 1932:79). The West is treated as exceptional in terms of its global scope and its transformative impulses.

Spengler argued that the West’s drive to explore the infinite was expressed in its mathematics and science, principally physics. His discussion focused on the ability of Western mathematicians to conceptualise the abstract and therefore the potential of the infinite (*Decline*:62-3). Combined with a preoccupation for measurement, these qualities facilitated the development of machines and technologies, a theme explored in *Man and Technics*(1932). In many ways, technology provided the ultimate expression of the Faustian soul. He described the West’s passion for technology as:

...the outward-and upward-straining life-feeling- true descendant, therefore, of the Gothic. ... The intoxicated soul wills to fly above Space and Time. (*Decline*:411)

Technology, therefore, was seen as evolving from the Faustian spirit. The West’s monopoly of technical power and knowledge translated into economic capacity and wealth. This was treated as the critical foundation on which the West’s military



capacity was built, and the foundation of the West's unrivalled superiority in the nineteenth century (Spengler, 1932:99).

However, whilst the industrial age is treated as a period of unrivalled Western superiority, it is regarded as transitory rather than the foundation point of further growth and development, again distinguishing Spengler from modernist thinkers (Farrenkopf, 1993:398). Furthermore, within the fruit of the West's sources of power lay the seeds of its destruction. Spengler felt that machines which had at first allowed men to enslave nature had now enslaved man (*Decline*:411-2). Spengler argued that, on the one hand, technical thinking had become too esoteric and artificial; on the other, mechanisation had taken over Western civilisation, threatening to poison and sterilise both the natural environment and the soul of Faustian man (Spengler, 1932:93). Furthermore, he castigated the West for squandering its privileges by foolishly liquidating its monopoly of technical knowledge as more non-Western societies became industrialised (Spengler, 1932:100-1). Writing in an era in which Germany was being devastated by economic depression, Spengler suggested the privileged but increasingly alienated Western economies had become vulnerable to competition from low wage economies where the work ethic was stronger (Spengler, 1932:89, 100). The West's power in terms of technological capacity is therefore treated as exceptional. At the same time, it is qualified externally by the challenge of other Cultures, but also internally by the forces which the West's technical and intellectual capacity had unleashed.

Spengler's pessimism with regard to the increasingly negative dimensions of technology in the West accorded with his organic thesis on the cycle of Cultures and the finite nature of growth and power. He believed that in the early twentieth century, the West was reaching the limits of achievement, exhausting its inner possibilities in all fields (*Decline*:212-25). Consequently, many of the achievements which other commentators would regard as signifying the growth and expansion of the West and its power, Spengler viewed as indications of the consolidation of the West as a creative intellectual force. This is also evident in his attitude to economics and politics, in particular to ideas with regard to capitalism, or the 'money-economy'.

As in other fields, Spengler rejected the idea of a universally valid form of economic thought, seeing economic life as unique to each Culture. However, all economies matured through the cycles of their Cultures. The development of the money economy coincided with a Culture becoming increasingly urban. The world-city economy was the economy of Civilisations (*Decline*:406). As a Culture matured in the metropoli, money rather than ideas becomes a source of power, and comes to dominate politics. Eventually, the money economy tears away at the soul, and destroys the unity of a Culture. Spengler saw modern Western capitalism as such a progression. Curiously for one who admired the spirit of struggle and competition, Spengler did not hold the spirit of capitalism in high esteem. This low regard appears to stem from the perception that capitalism promotes individual aggrandisement rather than the welfare of the community. He characterised it as emanating from the English aspect of the Faustian spirit, depicting Anglo-American society as the heartland of this particular development in Western Civilisation (*Decline*:402; Spengler, 1967).<sup>38</sup> The Culture was, in a sense, moving westward away from its spiritual heartland in Germany and becoming more tawdry and materialistic. In the process, the power of capital, expressed through big business, was viewed as dominating and corrupting Western politics (Spengler, 1967:118). Spengler believed that the dominance of money would eventually be overthrown by the reawakening the old traditions in the era of the warring states, the call to 'blood' by the new forces of 'Caesarism' (*Decline*:414).<sup>39</sup>

Spengler therefore treats the West as an exceptional Civilisation which has achieved unprecedented levels of power. Yet it is not the sheer weight of this capacity which defines the West for Spengler, but its Faustian character which is also the source of its power. The West's desire and capacity to explore and shape the rest of the world are an inseparable aspect of his conception. At the same time, the power of the West is transient, founded upon the continuing strength of its

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<sup>38</sup> Note that at this stage of its development, Spengler is treating the West as a Civilisation rather than a Culture.

<sup>39</sup> By 'Caesarism', Spengler meant a return to an imperial form of politics where power is concentrated in the hands of strong individuals, becoming a 'wholly personal power' such as that wielded by an Augustus or a Ghengis Khan (*Decline*:378-81).

spirit. As the spirit ebbed towards exhaustion, so the power of the West became vulnerable. This was marked for Spengler by tendencies towards pacifism, complacency and urban alienation.<sup>40</sup>

### *Norms*

Underpinning the boundaries of the West's identity is a strong normative dimension. Spengler's cultural communities were constituted around, and driven by, an inner spirit or central idea. Concepts of territory, race, religion and even power were derived from inner sources as much as they were objectively generated. Spengler emphasised the roots of community in common perceptions, such as 'race feeling', and shared traditions and histories. He saw the 'peoples of Cultures' as metaphysical communities. For him 'the people' was a spiritual, rather than a biological, political or linguistic category. The defining feature of the Western soul is the 'will-to-power', (Spengler, 1932:79). Yet, whilst the normative dimension is critical to Spengler's conception of the West, many of the norms, values and institutions commonly associated with the West he regards as transitional or specific to a part of the West.<sup>41</sup> Liberal values and structures often celebrated as achievements of the West are treated by Spengler as masking the realities of power which underlie politics.

Spengler laid great emphasis on the spirit of the individual as a central aspect of the Faustian character. This is most powerfully expressed in his exploration of the exercise of the individual's free will in Western Christianity (*Decline*:303). He also observed the emergence of the 'ego', the 'I', in the languages of the West (*Decline*:136-7), and the celebration of the inner-person in Western history and art, in biography, portraiture and drama (*Decline*:136, 166, 171). However, individualism cannot be described as the defining norm of Spengler's West. The spirit of individualism did not overwhelm or detract from the significance of the

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<sup>40</sup> These were symptoms of decline which Spengler also identified as occurring in other decaying civilisations, such as in the Roman empire (Farrenkopf, 1993:400; Spengler, 1934:205-7).

<sup>41</sup> The ideals of the French revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, often taken as central to the modern West are described by Spengler as represented in three distinct political programs propounded by three revolutions; the English representing the ideal of liberal parliamentarianism; the French representing the ideal of social democracy; and the German representing authoritarian socialism (Spengler, 1967:16).

community, it was part of the spirit of that community.<sup>42</sup> Within the West, Spengler recognised some nations as more individualistic than others. For example, the English national spirit was characterised as one of individualism, a spirit expressed in its economic institutions through capitalism, and in its political institutions through liberalism. However, Spengler juxtaposes these norms and institutions with those of the Prussian nation whose spirit gives priority to the community. The individual achieves fulfilment within and through the community, through service and obedience. These values are expressed in the bureaucratic authoritarian state through 'Prussian socialism', a term which Spengler employs to mean 'collective instinct' rather than class theory (Spengler, 1967:10).<sup>43</sup>

In his 1919 work, 'Prussianism and Socialism', Spengler represents the tension between ideas which privilege the individual and the community, between capitalism and socialism, as one of the central struggles of modern history. This is not represented as a struggle between the West and outside ideas, but as a battle for ideological supremacy within the West linked to the battle for hegemony between the Anglo-American tradition, representing individualism and capitalism, and the Prussian tradition, representing the collective ideal (Spengler, 1967).<sup>44</sup>

In other areas, norms and values often viewed as central to defining the West are portrayed in Spengler's work as manifestations of the West as a maturing Culture.

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<sup>42</sup> Hughes argues that Spengler essentially subordinated the role of the individual to the working of the vast historical process. He also stresses the centrality of the state to Spengler's historical scheme (Hughes, 1952:62). However, we cannot neglect the significance which the spirit of individualism played in Spengler's conceptualisation of the character of the Faustian West.

<sup>43</sup> In his essay 'Prussianism and Socialism', Spengler detailed his ideas of what true socialism represents. He identifies 'ethical socialism' as a constant element of the West's political make-up. This he defined as a desire to mould and change the world. However, he was hostile to socialism as described by Marx. He viewed it as an ideology of the late period of a Culture. As Fischer notes, Spengler saw Marxism as a cancer on the body politic which produced class war the dictatorship of the proletariat and the destruction of the state. He was also critical of English socialism which he argued was actually driven by capitalist motivation to enrich the less well off. In 'Prussianism and Socialism', he proposed a form of Prussian socialism, one which advocated a strong but benevolent state around which a classless society could rally (Spengler, 1967; Fischer, 1989:46).

<sup>44</sup> In *Man and Technics*, Spengler further links this great internal conflict to the traditional orders of the warrior nobility and the priesthood; the first representing the world of facts, the other the world of philosophy which privileges the intellect. In Faustian culture, this struggle is represented in political conflicts ranging from that between the Empire and Papacy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, through to the conflict between the forces of tradition and those of 'plebeian rationalism' in the French and German revolutions (Spengler, 1932:79).

For instance, the spirit of rationalism is represented not as an aspect of the West's growth, but as symptomatic of a Culture whose creative spirit is waning. Spengler saw all later Cultures entering into a period where intellectualism gained prominence and power. Intellectualism, he suggested, with its focus on words and abstract ideas, masked the reality that politics was driven by power. The dominance of intellectualism in the West was signalled by the Enlightenment which introduced the critical spirit of rationalism, a school of thought which Spengler defined as based purely on materialism (*Decline*:343). This was viewed as a negative force which attacked and undermined the traditions of a Culture, replacing them with empty ideas and catchwords (*Decline*:365). Rationalism was a new religion which replaced God with force, but which itself had no soul.

Similarly, Spengler had little or no faith in the concepts of rights and freedom as propounded by Enlightenment thinkers, seeing them as symptomatic of a Culture heading towards spiritual decline. Liberalism and socialism were philosophies of an age of theory which Spengler believed was drawing to an end (*Decline*:390). Based on the principles of liberty and equality, these philosophies promoted a broader distribution of political power through practices such as universal suffrage. But for Spengler, whilst democracy promised to devolve power to the people, in reality, power remained in the hands of a minority. Elections were manipulated by those with the real power in the late West, those with money such as big business and those who controlled the Press.<sup>45</sup> He argued:

The concepts of Liberalism and Socialism are set in effective motion only by money. ... There is no proletarian, not even a Communist, movement that has not operated in the interest of money, in the directions indicated by money and for the time permitted by money. (*Decline*:367)

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<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Spengler argued that the democratisation of education had simply created a class that was more easily but unwittingly manipulated by the media. See his virulent attack on the power of the Press (*Decline*:393-7) For his discussion of democracy as a vehicle for money and transition to 'Caesarism' see *The Decline*(391-3). Money ultimately destroys democracy and intellectualism but is itself overcome in the final conflict with 'blood', the new Caesarism which overwhelms politics (*Decline*:414). Spengler continues his attack on the control of politics, both national and international in 'Prussianism and Socialism'. The League of Nations, he argued for instance, was in reality not a system of self-governance, but a system of provinces and protectorates for the exploitation of business oligarchies with the aid of corrupt politicians (Spengler, 1967:118).

These ideas which promised to free the peoples of the West were enslaving rather than emancipating them. Democracy was but a transition phase to the new era of 'Caesarism'. Again, there is a sense of the Culture moving westward as it declined, and of the significant tensions within the Culture. The development of many of the unsavoury norms and ideas of late Culture in the West are ascribed to England and the United States. These include the development of political and economic liberal ideas, the press and the extensive financial manipulation of elections (*Decline*:368, 393).<sup>46</sup>

Spengler was, then, very conscious of the importance of the spiritual and normative dimensions of a Culture. However, he was equally conscious of the underlying power structures and forces of politics. These forces were as central to the constitution of the West as other cultures. Spengler's treatment of the ideas and norms often viewed as representing the West is therefore unconventional. A similar trait can be found in the way he viewed the institutions of the West.

### *Institutions*

In Spengler's work, no one institution emerges as a permanent or fixed expression of the West. The meaning of institutions is closely related to the context in which they are formed. Hence, Spengler argues that concepts such as 'democracy' and 'republicanism' were not constant but meant different things in different cultural contexts (*Decline*:361). This entails a rejection of the idea of universal institutions.

The state was a central institution of politics for Spengler. In 'Prussianism and Socialism', the state is described as the ultimate form of community. World history is referred to as the history of states, and of the wars between them (Spengler, 1967:69). However, Spengler did not see the state as constituted by abstract universal institutions and norms, but by the spirit of a community at its particular point in history. Therefore, Spengler does not appear to have a fixed concept of how a state should be constituted:<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Whilst these were accepted as appropriate to Anglo-American culture, Spengler denounced them as disastrous when transferred to other contexts, such as Germany (Spengler, 1967:44).

<sup>47</sup> For instance, the English state was described as a loose society of individuals, structured on a hierarchy of wealth. The Prussian state was described as an integrated community structured on a

The true political shape of any given country is not to be found in the wording of its constitution; it is rather, the unwritten, unconscious laws according to which the constitution is put into effect. (Spengler, 1967:71)

Spengler laid great emphasis on the unity of spirit in a community, on the quality of leadership and on the relationship between the leadership and the people. Good leadership was understood as due in part to the skills of the leader, but also developed through traditions passed on through the ruling classes.<sup>48</sup> These traditions contributed to stability in the political community. Leaders were preferably drawn from an elite class, for Spengler was elitist in his view of politics as in other areas of society:<sup>49</sup>

Politically gifted *peoples* do not exist. Those which are supposed to be so are simply people that are firmly in the hands of a ruling minority and inconsequence feel themselves to be in good form. (*Decline*:382)

Spengler believed political communities were divided into estates with leadership drawn mainly from the first estate, a nobility that has an instinct for statesmanship, a minority such as the English 'gentry' or the merchant-aristocracy of Venice. As leadership devolved to the lower estates, it became less responsible, more self-interested (*Decline*:364).<sup>50</sup>

Spengler's understanding of leadership patterns lead to a distinctive reading of political institutions of the West. The high point of politics in the West was represented by the dynastic states of Europe, particularly the unified strong leadership the *ancien régime* of French-formed culture (*Decline*:83). The rise of the bourgeoisie in eighteenth century Europe marked the beginning of the transition of

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hierarchy of rank achieved through ability and work to the state. However, Spengler did demonstrate preferences for some structures over others. For instance, he refers to the Prussian state as 'a true state in the most exacting sense of the word', a state in which there were no private individuals since each person was an integral member of the state-system (Spengler, 1967:79).

<sup>48</sup> Spengler believed that leadership qualities were inculcated through 'breeding', or training in the ruling nobility.

<sup>49</sup> This sense of elitism permeates Spengler's work. For instance, he argues elsewhere that all great discoveries spring from 'the delight of strong men in *victory*', not from the utilitarian thinking of the masses (Spengler, 1932:87).

<sup>50</sup> Leadership qualities were also to be found in the second estate, the Church. However, not so in the third estate, the urban bourgeoisie. This estate introduced a negative element into politics, 'the politics of opposition', seeking to replace tradition with their own interests.

the West from a Culture to a Civilisation.<sup>51</sup> It coincided with the rise of the cities. Urban politics provided the arena for forces which rose to undermine tradition and stability. These forces were the rise of intellectualism and of money: 'Intellect rejects, money directs - so it runs in every last act of a Culture drama, when the megalopolis has become master over the rest' (*Decline*:367). The French Revolution, described by Spengler as 'glorious' in some respects, also signalled the introduction of the destructive element of 'the mob' as a force in politics. The rise of representative politics and of parliamentary politics signalled the civilisational phase of the West.

Parliament is another Western institution which Spengler treats with some caution, if not scepticism. For Spengler, parliamentary government is a product of English society. In this context, he admired its success. But the secret of this success, is that informally, power continued to be held by the educated and traditional elite. This helped to maintain a basic political cohesion. On the continent, however, the parliamentary system became a divisive rather than a cohesive force (*Decline*:373). Once again, Spengler outlined significant differences in the character of communities within the West, this time with respect to institutions. Institutions of representative politics which might be thought of as characterising the West are represented by Spengler, not only as not universal, but as appropriate only to a subsection of Western civilisation (Spengler, 1967:71-2).<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, no institutions were treated as fixed features of the West. In fact, current Western institutions such as parliamentarianism were predicted to change and decay with the onset of the new 'Caesarism' (Spengler, 1967:89).

Spengler identifies no single institution as a permanent expression of the West. His approach accommodated a range of different political traditions and institutions within this community. The norms and institutions underlying authoritarianism, liberalism and socialism, are all accounted for in his historical mosaic. In part, they

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<sup>51</sup> He also argued that the inadequacy of the leadership by the bourgeoisie allowed a fourth estate, 'the mob', to become a force in politics, pointing to the evolution of the French revolution to illustrate his point. This force is portrayed as a force of destruction (*Decline*:364-5).

<sup>52</sup> Spengler's criticism in 'Prussianism and Socialism' is mainly aimed at the German liberals and the Weimar constitution. He advocated authoritarian Prussian socialism as more appropriate to this sector of the West, meaning a benevolent, all encompassing state.



are understood as aspects of the West's morphological growth, but at other times the coexistence of different ideas is explained as expressing different national characteristics within the West. Spengler's discussion is however imbued with a sense of decline rather than progress in the quality of the institutions of the modern West.

### ***Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

An understanding of Spengler's views on civilisations, and on the boundaries within which he conceptualised the West, contributes important insights into how he perceived and analysed interaction between the West and other civilisations. His work celebrates the West as a Culture which has achieved unprecedented levels of technical and intellectual growth and control; but it is distinctive in its rejection of theories of broad human progress, and its consciousness of the finite nature of the West's own development and progress. It is also distinctive in its Germanic focus.

Underlying Spengler's perception of civilisational interaction is his belief that civilisations are multiple. He acknowledged not only the existence, but also the importance of other civilisations in human history. The West was not taken as the sole representative of civilisation. As Farrenkopf notes, Spengler played a pioneering role in expanding the horizons of historical inquiry beyond Euro-centric constraints to include non-Western cultures on a roughly even footing with the West (Farrenkopf, 1993:398). In fact, Spengler was critical of the Euro-centric focus of Western scholarship. He considered Western 'world-history' as inordinately skewed towards the history of the West and the sense that the West represented some form of fulfilment in man's overall development. The West, he complained, 'rigs the stage' of world history:

The Western European area is regarded as a fixed pole, a unique patch chosen on the surface of the sphere for no better reason, it seems, than because we live on it - and the great histories of millennial duration and mighty faraway Cultures are made to revolve around this pole in all modesty. It is a quaintly conceived system of sun and planets! (*Decline*:13)

Spengler was critical of viewing history as falling into 'ancient - medieval - modern' periods as used by Western historians. This, he felt, privileged the

significance of the 'modern' age and failed to represent the significance and independence of Cultures which preceded the West in other parts of the globe. World-history should be 'the complete biography' of these independent cultures (*Decline*:230; Farrenkopf, 1993:396).

Furthermore, whilst Spengler recognised the spectacular growth and achievements of the West, he emphasised the limits of that growth:

...the future of the West is not limitless tending upwards and onwards for all time towards our present ideals, but a single phenomenon of history, strictly limited and defined as to form and duration, which covers a few centuries and can be viewed and, in essentials, calculated from available precedents. (*Decline*:30)

The stage of growth achieved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries 'hitherto looked on as the highest point of an ascending straight line of world history' are really 'a stage of life which may be observed in every Culture that has ripened to its limit' (*Decline*:29-30). He dismissed what he saw as misguided and inaccurate conceptions of world-history which adopted a progressive perspective. The West progressed, therefore, only within the terms of reference of its own Culture. Its growth was not seen by Spengler as representing the broader progress of mankind as a whole. There is no teleological, civilising process, but the rise and fall of a series of civilisations across time and space. In this he echoed Nietzsche who had remarked: "Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is to say, a false idea' (Farrenkopf, 1993:393).

At the same time, he excused the tendency to view Western history as world-history due to the unique breadth of the West's world view: 'We men of the Western Culture are, with our historical sense, an exception not a rule. World-history is our world picture and not all mankind's' (*Decline*:12). Therefore, whilst rejecting Western notions of universal progress, Spengler still treated the West as exceptional and global in its world view.

Spengler wove his discussion of the contributions of different facets of Western society into the history of the whole Culture. Three nations are identified as embodying the most powerful expression of the Faustian spirit, England, Spain and Prussia; other nations, such as Italy and France, provide elements antithetical to the

Faustian spirit (Spengler, 1967:32-5). The French nation appears to occupy a particularly complex place for Spengler. At points it is castigated as provincial in its political thinking, failing to bring forth a single political idea (1967:78). Elsewhere, the dynastic states of the French *ancien régime* and the character of Napoleon are praised, and French culture described as presenting Western creative principles in their sweetest form in the Rococo era: 'Indeed, French culture is the *only* culture. England meant the beginning of civilisation' (Spengler, 1967:36).

Overall, however, Spengler's work seeks to convey a deeply integrated understanding of Western history and culture in which all aspects of social development relate to internal dynamics rather than trans-cultural movements. Whilst Spengler could not ignore the influence of other cultures, he strongly emphasised the qualities which made the West unique. From the outset, he distinguished the West from Hellenic Culture, which he referred to as Apollonian Culture.<sup>53</sup> Whilst most historians trace the history of the West from its Graeco-Roman antecedents, Spengler sought to distance the two, comparing and contrasting many aspects of the two cultures throughout his work, constantly illustrating difference rather than progression from one to the other.<sup>54</sup>

Given that Spengler saw Civilisations as historically independent, it is understandable that the historical dynamic was viewed as coming from within a Civilisation rather than from interaction with other Cultures (Dray, 1980:102). This does not mean that the impact of interaction is insignificant. However, it was not read as the source of history. Interaction emerges more as part of the function of the inner dynamics of Civilisations, driven by their internal spiritual quest for fulfilment.<sup>55</sup> Spengler certainly appeared most interested in the internal dynamics of Western Culture, with interaction presented as a secondary concern.

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<sup>53</sup> Apollonian Culture refers to Hellenic cultures which he describes as reaching maturity and then decline in the Imperial Roman era. It was a term borrowed from Nietzsche.

<sup>54</sup> Spengler did demonstrate his admiration for Graeco-Roman culture. However, in contrasting it to the West, Apollonian Culture was portrayed as stereo-scopic in its conceptualisation of the world; incapable of envisaging the abstract in its arts and sciences; parochial, pantheistic, ahistorical and lacking a strong sense of the individual.

<sup>55</sup> This contrasts with more liberal perspectives which see interaction and cross-fertilisation as an important source of growth. See, for instance, the work of William McNeill(1991).

Whilst Spengler denied the historical interdependence of Cultures, he could not deny the impact which the West had made upon the lives of other Cultures and Civilisations. Whilst the West is cited by Spengler as one of a number of Civilisations, it is also perceived as the only one still at a stage of growth. Other Civilisations are seen as fossils of the past, or strangled without reaching fulfilment. Therefore, the West is again treated as exceptional in that other Civilisations were not viewed as coexisting in the present on an equal footing. Western Culture was defined as one which constantly pushed outward, to explore and shape the world, and Spengler acknowledged that this had influenced the fate of non-Western peoples. For instance, the encounter between Mexican and Western Cultures led to the collapse of the young Aztec Culture. The vigorous Aztec culture, which had emerged to challenge the decaying Mayan civilisation, was effectively wiped out by a handful of European bandits. This encounter demonstrated for Spengler the brutality, randomness and irrationality of history (*Decline*:239-42). Russian Culture is also described as one which has been suffocated by the West. For Spengler, the 'primitive soul' of Russia is a peasant soul which was not allowed to evolve, but was forced into an alien Western mould through the policies initiated by Peter the Great. Westernisation imposed a false, abstract, urban culture on Russia which effectively detached the Westernised upper classes from the peasant lower classes (*Decline*:270-4). This implies that the underlying spirit of the Russian revolution was a desire of the Russian people to throw off this alien superstructure<sup>56</sup>

For the most part, the West's relationship with the non-West was accepted as unequal. The white races of the West had physically spread throughout the globe (Spengler, 1934:208). The rest of the world was effectively the market for Western products and the supplier of raw materials (Spengler, 1932:100). The relationship between West and non-West in the late nineteenth century was perceived as largely an imperial one. Spengler does not applaud or romanticise imperialism. It is portrayed as exploitative and oppressive, but a normal aspect of the relationship

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<sup>56</sup> The future of Russia, therefore, belonged not to Marxism or Bolshevism, which Spengler saw as equally alien, but the reassertion of the Russian spirit (*Decline*:274; Spengler, 1934:209).

between High Cultures and other peoples (Spengler, 1934:204; Farrenkopf, 1993:402). It was, however, perceived as a signifier of decline: 'Imperialism is Civilisation unadulterated.' Cecil Rhodes is represented as not only a paragon of Western imperialism, but a precursor to a Western type of Caesar (*Decline*:28).

There is then a strong sense of civilisational hierarchy implied in Spengler's discussion in the relationship between the modern West and non-West, although this was not perceived as a permanent hierarchical relationship. In its decline, Spengler foresaw a significant shift in the nature of the West's relationship with the non-West. In his later works, this was discussed in terms of the relationship between the white and non-white races, an early twentieth century image of the 'West against the Rest'.

In the twentieth century, Spengler perceived the non-West posing major threats to the West, both economically, through low wage economies, and politically, through the non-West's uptake of liberal and socialist ideas. The two central threats identified were Russia and an increasingly dynamic Japan. In this context, Spengler's differentiation of Russia from the West becomes highly significant.<sup>57</sup>

Spengler recognised that the threat from the non-West stemmed from an understandable resentment felt towards the imperialist West, but it was fuelled by an increased capacity to challenge the West. This shift in the balance of power Spengler ascribed to foolish dissemination of the technological knowledge, skills and political ideas (Spengler, 1932:101).

However, whilst the non-West constituted a visible external threat, the real enemy of the West for Spengler was internal decline. Loss of the fighting spirit, intellectual and creative sterility, falling birth rates, the breakdown of the family, all were seen as feeding the internal decay which makes the imperial power vulnerable to attack from the 'barbarians at the gate' (Spengler, 1934:205). Here, Spengler drew upon his classical scholarship to model a pattern of Western decay that paralleled the history of other declining civilisations. The fear of civilisations becoming jaded and lethargic with prosperity and age can also be found in other

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<sup>57</sup> Described as 'an Asian nation', Russia presented to the West the risk of both class war and race war (Spengler, 1934:210).

authors, even amongst liberal thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Toynbee. Spengler adds to this fear the concept of a West riven throughout its history by ongoing struggle for hegemony of the Faustian soul (Spengler, 1967:6). The vitality of the West is, therefore, a critical factor in Spengler's reading of the course of civilisational interaction.

Spengler's perception of interaction is coloured by an intensely competitive perception of civilisational relationships. Cultures and civilisations are portrayed as not only incommensurable, but locked into relationships of struggle where weakness in one creates opportunities for others. Therefore, World War I and the League of Nations, in which the coloured races were allowed a say in disputes between white states, were regarded by Spengler as critical points at which the West demonstrated weakness, losing the respect of the 'coloured races' (Spengler, 1934:209-10). He perceived the non-West as not simply wishing to compete with the West, but to destroy it (Spengler, 1934:218). However, Spengler's discussion of the threat posed to the West from other peoples does not suggest that these peoples would be able to build upon the civilisation of the West. As Farrenkopf notes, they are seen as inheriting the tools, but not the spirit of the West, with non-Western people 'taking over forms that have virtually completed their process of cultural evolution and exhausted their inner possibilities - they are end forms' (Farrenkopf, 1993:395; Spengler, 1932:103). The assimilation of non-Western peoples of Western science and technology amounted to 'little more than an impressive act of imitation' (Farrenkopf, 1993:399). Most importantly, the challenge posed by the non-West through imitation of the West was not viewed as the commencement of a new global culture.

Therefore, Spengler's perception of the West's interaction with other peoples, cultures and civilisations presents a curious mix of opinions. He argued that there is no world history as a universal process due to the independence, incommensurability and mutual incomprehension of Cultures. He stressed competition and challenge more than cross fertilisation in his discussion of civilisational interaction. At the same time he portrayed the West as a global civilisation which has a sense of world history, due not to teleology, but to the unique qualities of the West. The West is a civilisation which is global in scale and

one which has touched all other civilisations. Its expansion, however, is not seen as an infinite process. It is a civilisation in long term decline, heading for an era of war and demagoguery. Whilst other civilisations may imitate in order to compete with the West, it was not viewed as providing the foundations for a universal civilisation. Therefore, Spengler did not suggest that humanity was moving towards the evolution of a single human civilisation through emulation of the West.

## ***Conclusion***

Spengler's conception of the West is embedded in a cultural world order comprised of independent and largely incommensurable civilisations. Civilisations are organic entities, pursuing independent cycles of growth and decay. Within this context, Spengler presents a deeply integrated conception of the West which radically differs from conventional images of this community. The history of the West which Spengler presents sought to explain the present point in history within a broad, cyclical process. It is distinctive in its sense of the organic development of society as an integrated whole within the framework of an essentially self-contained history. It is also distinctive in its rejection of theories of broad human progress and its consciousness of the finite nature of the West's own development and progress. Looking at an era which to many demonstrated the West at a stage of unprecedented growth, Spengler saw only consolidation that would lead to retraction.

Critical to Spengler's constitution of the West are the internal bonds and shared characteristics which unite the diverse components of this community. The external characteristics of the West were seen to emanate from the internal *Geist* of the community. Therefore, his conception is essentially of a spiritual and normative community rather than a material one. However, Spengler is critical of many of the norms and institutions commonly associated with the West, such as progress and rationalism. In arguing that beliefs, values and histories are relative, and in rejecting the idea that the West is a universal culture, Spengler shares something with contemporary post-modern theorists.

One of the distinctive features of Spengler's West is its strongly Germanic nature, demonstrated, for instance, by his treatment of the Renaissance as an outgrowth of Gothic rather than Mediterranean Culture. The youthful creative source of the West was located in the German heartland, but mature features of the West are associated with the societies of England and the United States. The decline of the West is therefore associated with the influence of these regions. Spengler's consistent differentiation of Western and Hellenic Cultures is also striking. The West is not simply a natural progression or rearticulation of Hellenic Culture but a unique entity in itself. This is consistent with Spengler's theory that the history and culture of civilisations are essentially self-contained, rather than linked by trans-cultural trends and movements. Spengler's ideas were not unique. Hughes argues his interpretation of the history of the High Middle Ages through to the seventeenth century as high points in Western culture is less original than it at first appears (Hughes, 1952:85-6). Likewise, there are precedents for his critical assessment of nineteenth century Western culture. However, Spengler's overall panorama and pervading pessimism with regard to the future of the Western community were and remain disturbing. His work reminds us of the range and complexity of ideas and traditions which contribute to the civilisational identity of the West. Furthermore, it shows that it is possible to draw on Western traditions and thinkers to produce a conception of the West which rejects much of what is often assumed to be quintessentially Western.

Spengler's cultural world order resembles a state of nature. His image of inter-civilisational relations, particularly in his later work, is not only competitive but conflictual. The impact which civilisations have upon one another is largely negative. Within this context, Spengler viewed the West as exceeding its civilisational predecessors and dominating its contemporaries through the sheer scale of its intellectual, technical and spiritual capacity. However, whilst the West is conceptualised as exceptional and global in scope, and the dominant civilisation in modern world history, Spengler does not suggest that it provides a model, foundation or framework for a universal civilisation. His concept of the separateness and cyclicity of civilisation eliminates any prospects for a universal order outside the framework of imperialism. Instead, Spengler is anti-cosmopolitan



in tone. Spengler's image of cultural world order is one which encourages cultural consolidation rather than the pursuit of universal ideals or structures. Ultimately, Spengler's conceptions are shaped by the perception that the West's power is in decline; Faustian man is entering his twilight years. However, whilst he acknowledges that the fading West is increasingly challenged by non-Western rivals, he does not identify a potential successor to the West. Therefore, in the long run, the world order which Spengler describes is an uncertain and insecure one, likely to be characterised by struggles for power, both within the decaying West and outside.

## *Chapter Four*

### *The Parochial Civilisation: Arnold Toynbee's Conception of the West*

'The encounter between the World and the West may well prove ... to be the most important event in modern history' wrote Arnold Toynbee (Toynbee, 1958b:223). He further notes that this civilisational encounter is an outstanding instance of a historical phenomenon which is one of the keys to understanding the history of mankind. The quotation suggests the importance of civilisations in Toynbee's reading of world history. Like Oswald Spengler, Toynbee's cultural world order comprises a plurality of independent civilisations in various stages of growth and decline. However, unlike Spengler, he sees encounters between civilisations as critical events in the broader context of human history.

The quotation also highlights the significance which Toynbee attaches to the role of the West in such encounters in modern history. He wrote extensively on the role of the West in world politics, both past, present and future; this despite his own criticism of the Western-centric focus of contemporary history. However, the West features in his work as but one actor in a complex set of relationships between a plurality of civilisations. Toynbee recognises the West as an ascendant civilisation, suggesting that, at one level, it has created the foundation for a global society. At the same time, he adopts a critical attitude to aspects of the West and its impact on other societies, rejecting the idea that the West in itself represents a universal civilisation. Whereas Spengler characterised the West as a civilisation striving always for the infinite, Toynbee characterises it as one which is global in reach, but wedded to narrow and parochial ideas and institutions.

Toynbee (1889-1975) was a prolific, provocative and complex author. His work is breathtaking in scope and volume.<sup>1</sup> His distinguished career as a historian and commentator on world politics spanned more than sixty years of the twentieth century. The impact of the century's dramatic events and changes can be seen in his reading of world history and politics. The volume and scope of his work naturally gives rise to a degree of complexity. This is augmented by significant tensions within Toynbee's work, relating, for instance, to the degree to which a civilisation's history is seen as pre-determined or driven by the actions of society; to the role of religion in civilisational history; and to the role of the West as one of many actors in the cultural world order, or as a central, formative force in that order.

This chapter does not survey Toynbee's complete works, but draws on a selection of key publications relating to civilisational interaction and the West. These include *A Study of History*, his major work published in three stages between 1934 and 1954;<sup>2</sup> *Civilisations on Trial*, a collection of articles and lectures published in 1948; and *The World and the West*, a published collection of Toynbee's 1952 BBC Reith lectures. In these, we find a complex concept of the cultural world order in which the modern West becomes a central actor.

### ***Toynbee's Era and Influences***

Toynbee's career was highly varied. Unlike Spengler, he was not solely an academic. In fact, he seemed uneasy within the confines of academia, resigning from teaching positions at both Oxford and the University of London after relatively short periods. Whilst pursuing his academic interests, Toynbee travelled widely as a journalist and commentator on world affairs. He worked with organisations affiliated with the British Foreign Office during the First and Second World Wars and was a member of the British delegations to the Peace Conferences

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<sup>1</sup> S. Fiona Morton's bibliography of Toynbee's works lists 2974 separate publications that appeared between 1910 and 1979 either written by Toynbee or reviews of his publications (McNeill, 1989:289).

<sup>2</sup> Volumes I-III were published 1934; vols. IV-VI in 1939; and vols. VII-X in 1954. The references in this chapter refer to D.C. Somervell's abridged version of *A Study of History* (2 volumes). The first number refers to the volume, the second to the page number.

in 1919 and 1946. Most of his working life was spent as Director of Studies at the British, subsequently Royal, Institute of International Affairs in London. There, he divided his time between writing and editing the annual *Survey of International Affairs* (1925-1955).<sup>3</sup> He achieved fame in Britain, Europe and Japan, and celebrity status in the United States.

Born into a middle class family, Toynbee attended Balliol College, Oxford where his main studies were in Greek and Latin. On graduation, he became a don at Balliol, teaching Ancient History. His work was to reflect both his early interest in Byzantine and Middle Eastern history and his classical education.<sup>4</sup> The era in which Toynbee received his education was one in which Classical thought remained a significant intellectual influence, as illustrated by studies such as James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), and the contemporary interest in archaeology and philology. Toynbee's work reflects these influences. William McNeill, for instance, suggests that his work effectively translates models of the classical city states onto the global and civilisational scale.<sup>5</sup> Like Spengler, Toynbee was influenced by the cyclical view of history common in classical literature.

Three scholars who strongly influenced Toynbee were Plato, Herodotus and Thucydides. McNeill identifies Plato as the most significant influence (McNeill, 1961:37). Toynbee shared with Plato the quest for unity in complexity, exploring the interconnectedness of things (McNeill, 1961:44). He also echoed Plato in his use of metaphors to convey his message.<sup>6</sup> His early work was influenced by

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<sup>3</sup> Technically, he retained the research position of Stevenson Professor at the University of London.

<sup>4</sup> Stromberg notes that Hellenic thought was Toynbee's 'first intellectual love' (1972:14).

<sup>5</sup> Toynbee is also again thoroughly within the classical tradition in seeing the breakdown of civilisations as occurring primarily on the political plane (McNeill, 1961:35-6). Both Stromberg and McNeill note the strong influence of Toynbee's classical education on *A Study*. As McNeill points out, in the first three volumes of *A Study*, classical cultures provide a measuring rod against which other civilisations are measured. (McNeill, 1961:35-6; Stromberg, 1972:14). For A.J.P. Taylor (1956), the tendency to consistently draw on generalisations from classical history was a weakness in Toynbee's discussion of comparative civilisations.

<sup>6</sup> The theory of the impact of the withdrawal and return of creative forces in a civilisational development can also be found in both Plato and Toynbee (Stromberg, 1972:22). Perhaps one of the best known of Toynbee's metaphors is the image of civilisations as climbers on the face of a steep rock. The rock face represented the challenges which civilisations had to meet and conquer in order to proceed in their ascent. This image was used as a backdrop to Toynbee's portrait when he appeared in the cover of *Time* in March 1947.

Herodotus' study of the Persian War from which Toynbee drew the theme of the dichotomy between east and west. However, both McNeill and Stromberg speculate that the structure of *A Study* ultimately reflects the stronger influence of Thucydides, who conceived of the breakdown of societies along the model of Greek tragedy (Stromberg, 1972:14; McNeill, 1989:96). The First World War brought the work of Thucydides to life for Toynbee in a vivid and powerful way, suggesting parallels between Graeco-Roman and Western civilisations, and the idea of cyclical patterns of history:

Thucydides had declared that war 'proves a rough master, that brings most men's characters to a level with their fortunes.' It was this kind of psychological brutalisation that Toynbee had in mind in attributing the breakdown of civilisations to unregulated warfare. (McNeill, 1989:96)<sup>7</sup>

The conjunction of insights into classical history and the War strongly influenced Toynbee's views of the destructive impact of war on civilisations. In marked contrast to Spengler, Toynbee portrayed war as a destructive, degenerative force rather than an agent of creativity (Stromberg, 1972:92).

Toynbee's initial ambition was to write a history of Greece. However, in the early 1920s this expanded to a history of European civilisation as a whole, his ideas increasingly shaped by the perception of patterns of growth, breakdown and dissolution of civilisations.<sup>8</sup> Toynbee's macro approach was unusual, though not unprecedented. Working models existed, for instance, in Eduard Meyer *Geschichte des Altetums* (1884-1902) (McNeill, 1989:31). However, two significant influences which shaped Toynbee's method of comparative civilisational history were the works of F. J. Teggart and Oswald Spengler. Teggart advocated a broad, comparative historical methodology, studying of societies such as India and China as well as those of the Europe and the Near East (McNeill, 1989:100). Such a

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<sup>7</sup> The idea of a tragic model of history was developed by Toynbee in his 1922 lecture 'The Tragedy of Greece' which discussed the role of unregulated warfare in the breakdown of civilisations. In his technique of applying ideas drawn from classical studies to the contemporary world, Toynbee was no doubt influenced by his teacher, friend and father-in-law Gilbert Murray, a don at Balliol. See McNeill(1989).

<sup>8</sup> Toynbee's interest in the cyclical rise and fall of civilisations was stimulated by an extensive walking tour of Greece which he undertook in 1911.

comparative methodology was also adopted in Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendslandes* which Toynbee read in 1920. McNeill describes Spengler's work as 'a powerful factor' in altering Toynbee's outlook from focus on the perennial interaction between 'east' and 'west' in Eurasia to the history of multiple, separate, parallel civilisations whose rise and fall conformed to certain broad, tragic patterns (McNeill, 1989:98). This facilitated Toynbee's radical departure from conventional nineteenth century European history in portraying Western civilisation as one of many such communities rather than epitomising civilisation itself. McNeill further argues that Toynbee also borrowed from Spengler the idea that civilisations were 'intrinsically separate' and incapable of meaningful communication (McNeill, 1989:101).<sup>9</sup> However, Toynbee's concepts of civilisational affiliation and renaissance indicate that, in some instances, relationships between civilisations can be meaningful and constructive.

Toynbee theorised that civilisational growth was stimulated by the development of a creative minority. This idea has been attributed to the influence of the French philosopher Henri Bergson who argued that progress in society was not automatic or unconscious, but stimulated by the acts of creative individuals (Stromberg, 1972:22). Bergson appears to be one of the few contemporary philosophers who influenced Toynbee whose thinking was not shaped by modern scholars such as Weber, Durkheim or Freud. Unlike Spengler, he seems little influenced by intellectuals such as Nietzsche and Pareto, or writers such as Elliot, Joyce or Proust. In fact, Stromberg suggests that these contemporaries made Toynbee look like Pollyanna rather than a pessimist with regard to the state of Western civilisation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Both authors made an enormous popular impact with their theories. However, Toynbee's ideas appear to have had greater outreach. This was due to his style, which was more lucid in comparison to Spengler's polemics, the fact that he wrote in English, and also to the era in which Toynbee published. See McNeill (1989:165).

<sup>10</sup> Stromberg describes Toynbee as essentially Victorian in his thinking, an 'old-fashioned rationalist in his evaluation of men and their motives' (Stromberg, 1972:80-1). Lewis Mumford (1956), however, suggests some parallels between Toynbee and Reinhold Niebuhr who also saw the resolutions of the problems of the contemporary world in another, spiritual world. Toynbee's interest in Christianity and politics was also shared by Martin Wight, who for a time worked with Toynbee at the R.I.I.A. See Kedourie (1979).

Nevertheless, Toynbee's conception of the West was powerfully shaped by the broader political environment and by his personal involvement in the events of this era. Toynbee was deeply influenced by the suffering and destruction of the First World War when he worked at the Foreign Office Political Intelligence Unit, documenting atrocities in Armenia by the Turks and in Europe by the Germans. In 1919, he was a member of the British delegation to the Peace Conference where he advised on Middle Eastern Affairs. He was deeply disillusioned by the handling of affairs by the imperial powers and the duplicity of Allied policy towards the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> During the 1921 war between Greece and Turkey, Toynbee travelled to the front line and witnessed the war from both sides, there observing further atrocities, this time waged on the Turkish population by their Greek adversaries. These experiences provided a living demonstration of the result of encounters between civilisations. In *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (1922), he argued that both the Greek (Byzantine) civilisation and Turkish (Middle Eastern or Islamic) civilisation were in a process of dissolution due to their encounters with the more dynamic West. This process was exacerbated in both civilisations by the borrowing of elements of Western culture, in particular the institutions of the Western nation-state (McNeill 1989:110). This theme became central to Toynbee's work on civilisational interaction and the impact of the West. His suspicion of the negative impact of the borrowing of elements of Western culture was reinforced by his observations of Asian societies during a trip to Japan in 1929. He interpreted the disruptions and radical changes in societies such as India, China and Japan as indications of the breakdown of other civilisations under the pressure of contact with the West (McNeill, 1989:135-40). His work on the West's impact on the non-West, particularly as expressed in *The World and the West* (1953), brought him a great deal of criticism from many in Britain who felt he had been unduly harsh on the West, representing only the negative aspects of its impact on the non-West and failing to point to the benefits it had brought (McNeill, 1989:223).

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<sup>11</sup> McNeill discusses Toynbee's disappointment at failing to have his recommendations for the peace settlement with Turkey adopted. The policies adopted by Lloyd George soon broke down, resulting in war between Greece and Turkey (McNeill, 1989:82).

Toynbee's suspicion of the nation-state was reinforced and heightened by the course of international affairs in the 1920s and 1930s when he was involved in the production of the annual *Surveys of International Affairs*. He observed the rise of aggressive nationalism in Germany, Japan and Italy, and the failure of its containment through collective security at the League of Nations. Underlying his observations of international affairs was a conviction that plural sovereignties of the 'parochial' nation-state was 'an evil that had to be transcended' (McNeill, 1989:174). Toynbee's experience of war had led him to support the key tenets of post-war liberal diplomacy, such as the settlement of international disputes by arbitration, international legal structures and collective security. The failure of collective security and sanctions produced some disillusionment with secular and legal structures as a means to settling international quarrels.

Toynbee came to see the failure of the League of Nations as a failure in faith, particularly when contrasted with the mass support generated by 'quasi-religious' movements such as communism and fascism (McNeill, 1989:185). Elements in Toynbee's personal life combined to heighten the role of religion in his theories of the course of world history.<sup>12</sup> This, added to his disappointment with the secular structures of 1930s diplomacy, led Toynbee to argue that Western civilisation could only be saved from destruction by the redirection of the mind and spirit towards God and away from the nation-state (McNeill, 1989:170). In the early 1940s, Toynbee's writings and speeches laid increased emphasis on the significance of religion and especially the relevance of Christianity to Western civilisation.<sup>13</sup>

As the war drew to a close, Toynbee's emphasis on Christianity lessened slightly, but he remained convinced that national-state structures had to be superseded if a just and lasting peace was to be attained.<sup>14</sup> In the post-war period, Toynbee

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<sup>12</sup> These included the trauma of his son Tony's suicide in March 1939 and conversion to Catholicism by his wife Rosalind, to whom he was deeply attached despite growing increasingly distant.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, 'Christianity and Civilisation' (1958a).

<sup>14</sup> He argued this case during his tenure as head of the Foreign Research and Press Office and later Foreign Office Research Department.



travelled frequently to the United States, where he was extremely popular between 1947 and 1954. He believed the era signalled the emergence of the United States as the new world empire, the West's 'universal state', adjudging it likely to be a more benevolent regime than its rival, the Soviet Union (*A Study*:2/328-31; McNeill 1989:210-8).

This diverse range of personal, political and intellectual influences led Toynbee to produce a complex theory of civilisational history and a critical and distinctive conception of the West.

### ***Conceptions of Civilisations***

Toynbee's conception of the West, whilst influenced by his analysis of contemporary world politics, is deeply embedded within a philosophy of history focused on civilisational development and interaction; that is to say, like Spengler's, its context is a world history constituted by a plurality of civilisations. Toynbee also viewed civilisations or 'societies' rather than nations or periods as the intelligible units of historical studies (*A Study*:1/11; Toynbee, 1958a:195-7). Toynbee and Spengler both believed that civilisations evolved through life-stages rather than existing in fixed states. This consciousness of the multiplicity and mortality of civilisations in both scholars is related to the broad historical perspective which they derived from their studies of the classics. However, although Toynbee like Spengler identifies patterns in the rise and decline of civilisations, he rebuffed the notion that civilisations are destined to follow a fixed, predetermined life history. He rejected Spengler's theory of civilisations as organic entities and any suggestion that a civilisation's course is predetermined by factors such as race or environment (*A Study*:1/51-9, 210). Instead, he argued that civilisations grow in response to challenge, suggesting that 'creation is an outcome of an encounter, that genesis is a product of interaction' (*A Study*:1/67).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The environment is treated as one element which can challenge a civilisation. Other challenges might arise from the pressure of enemies, from the impact of defeat or subjugation, but the growth that constituted a civilisation arose from the creative and continued response to such occurrences (*A Study*:1/187). Growth continues to be stimulated by challenge since the perfect containment of challenges might lead a society to petrify. If challenges prove too strong, the society might be

Where Spengler presented a morphological concept of civilisations, Toynbee presents an anthropomorphised and social one. For Toynbee, true growth is a process of self-realisation; an inner, spiritual rather than an external, material process.<sup>16</sup> It is the achievement by a people of a sense of self-determination, meaning the capacity to control their own destiny rather than be driven by external or natural forces. Loss of this sense of self-determination indicates decline (*A Study*:1/208). Toynbee believed that the process of response to challenges is led by creative leaders within the society, surrounded by an elite described as the 'creative minority' (*A Study*:1/189). This elite must be able to inspire the majority to adopt or emulate their chosen course of action, a process Toynbee called *mimesis* (*A Study*:1/214-6).

Toynbee did not view the growth of a civilisation as limitless and infinite. Indeed, his diagnosis of the current state of civilisations implies that most eventually entered a process of disintegration. The process of breakdown involves political and social conflicts, 'times of troubles', characterised by wars, 'routs and rallies', leading to the establishment of peace under the auspices of a 'universal state' established by the 'dominant minority' within the civilisation. Finally, a 'universal church' emerges from the ideologies of the 'proletariat' becoming the final expression of the civilisation. The 'universal state' is ultimately undermined by the combination of the 'universal church' and external attacks, but it can also be weakened by complacency within. For Toynbee, the complacency or arrogance bred by success can inhibit a civilisation's capacity to meet new challenges, or lead to overextension and decline. Toynbee suggests that successful societies of the past had 'rested on their oars' and fallen into the 'nemesis of creativity' during which

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overwhelmed. A society which grew too complacent as a result of its past success might likewise be unable to meet a future challenge.

<sup>16</sup> Toynbee argued that the criterion for growth ultimately lies not in the conquest of the external environment, but 'rather in a progressive change of emphasis and shifting of the scene of action out of this field into another field, in which the action of challenge-and-response may find an alternative arena. In this other field challenges do not impinge from outside but arise from within, and victorious responses do not take the form of surmounting external objects or of overcoming an external adversary, but manifest themselves in an inward self-articulation or self-determination' (*A Study*:1/199). However, he acknowledged the importance of meeting material challenges, noting that technical achievement was valuable in the way that it freed man to work in a more ethereal medium (*A Study*:2/198).

they bound themselves to ephemeral institutions and techniques (*A Study*:1/307-37). This tendency was based on the illusion that the universal state is immortal rather than a transient set of structures (*A Study*:2/4-10). Some civilisations, however, never achieve their full potential, being arrested or absorbed by other cultures (*A Study*:1/164-85). Others become frozen in time, proceeding gradually on a course of collapse, making them vulnerable to the influence of, and even absorption by, more vigorous cultures such as the West in the modern era.<sup>17</sup>

McNeill argues that Toynbee saw civilisations as essentially separate entities, hypothesising only two meaningful forms of interaction could be recognised; affiliation and renaissance (1989:102).<sup>18</sup> However, encounters between civilisations do play a critical role in Toynbee's cultural world order, such encounters leading to cumulative changes within the weaker civilisation. Toynbee theorised that 'any civilisation, any way of life is an indivisible whole in which all the parts hang together and are interdependent' (Toynbee, 1958b:251). His concept of the cultural world order is premised on the belief that encounters between civilisations lead to the breakdown of weaker civilisations, their integrity undermined by cultural borrowing from the stronger (McNeill, 1989:102-3).

At the same time, the decline of a civilisation is ascribed to internal rather than external factors, with war and class strife cited as causing the destruction of most of the known previous civilisations (Toynbee, 1958a:32). Societies in a state of growth do not submit to external attack, only those already weakened by a process of internal decline.<sup>19</sup> Hence, he argues that the crises occurring in non-Western

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, his ongoing discussion of Eastern Orthodox Christendom, Islam as it transformed into the Ottoman empire, and references to Sinic culture. The Roman Empire was seen the final, universal state of the Hellenic civilisation.

<sup>18</sup> Toynbee defined 'affiliation' as contact in time between successive civilisations; whereas 'renaissance' refers to a relation between 'a grown up civilisation and the ghost of its long-dead predecessor' (*A Study*:2/146).

<sup>19</sup> Toynbee sees three central elements to the process of decline: a failure of creative power amongst the creative minority, which could lead to the adoption of an oppressive stance by this group which might then become the dominant minority; a withdrawal of allegiance and *mimesis* on the part of the majority; and a consequent loss of social cohesion in the society as a whole (*A Study*:1/246). Toynbee sees such societies then fragmenting into three: a dominant minority that instigated a universal state; an internal proletariat that instigated a universal church; and an external proletariat who in the past formed roving war-bands (*A Study*:1/368-370).

societies during the modern era resulted from their inability to resist the challenge of the stronger West.

Therefore, Toynbee's theory of civilisational encounter allows him to account for both external and internal challenges. There is, perhaps, some tension in Toynbee's theory of civilisational history in the degree to which a civilisation's history is shaped by patterns of growth or by internal resources. He ultimately appears to place the responsibility for the course of a civilisation's fate in its own hands, determined primarily by its response to challenges and new social forces. Such forces should give rise to new elites, but if this does not occur, it is possible that the old institutions of the society might adapt to new pressures. Failure to do so results in either hazardous revolution or complete breakdown (*A Study*:1/280). Civilisational decline, therefore, is regarded as a likely but not inevitable process.

Toynbee did not assume that conquest either of other peoples or nature was necessarily a sign of growth; it can indicate disintegration. In this, Toynbee demonstrates his antipathy towards war and his suspicion of technology and materialism. War is perceived as a destructive force, waged by wicked aggressors (Stromberg, 1972:92); militarism seen as often a sign of excess. Technical achievement, he argued, can also be a misleading indicator of growth, since many civilisations have continued to expand and innovate whilst in a state of social decline (*A Study*:1/189-97).<sup>20</sup>

Toynbee thus presents a rich theory of civilisational history, and a cultural world order comprising interacting civilisations in various stages of growth and decline. However, one recurrent criticism of this theory is its failure to provide a clear definition of what constitutes a civilisation (Braudel, 1980; Fitzsimons, 1961; McNeill, 1961). For instance, in his earlier work, Toynbee analyses civilisation as commencing at a point in which 'human will takes the place of the mechanical laws of the environment as the governing factor in the relationship.'<sup>21</sup> In *A Study*,

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<sup>20</sup> Toynbee also argues that the development of specialisation in a society comes to inhibit that society's creative capacity (*A Study*:1/327-8).

<sup>21</sup> Remarks made by Toynbee in lectures on ancient history delivered at University of London in 1919-20. Quoted in McNeill (1989:94).

Toynbee distinguishes primitive peoples, whom he sees as static and essentially backward looking in their social habits, from civilisations which are dynamic and forward looking (*A Study*:1/49). Elsewhere, he describes civilisation as 'a movement not a condition, a voyage, not a port', an effort to perform an act of creation (Toynbee, 1958a:57-8; Braudel, 1980:190). These definitions lack clarity. However, Toynbee was clear in dismissing any suggestion of the unity of civilisation, that is to say that there is only one civilisation (*A Study*:1/37).<sup>22</sup>

Western Christendom, which evolved into the modern West, is listed in Toynbee's *A Study of History* as but one of twenty one known civilisations, five of which are currently in existence (*A Study*:1/34).<sup>23</sup> However, the West is treated as exceptional in that it is the only civilisation believed to be in a stage of growth rather than petrification or decline. However, he felt the West was currently undergoing its 'times of trouble' and on the edge of the disintegrative process (*A Study*:1/275-349). It had undergone a crucial breakdown with the outbreak of the Wars of Religion in the seventeenth century, the ensuing centuries witnessing three cycles of warfare. This did not preclude the West's continued physical and technological expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, Toynbee perceived the West as reaching a crisis point, entering a fourth cycle of war and upheaval that in preceding civilisations had led to social disintegration, following the collapse of the universal state (*A Study*:2/273).<sup>24</sup> Whilst Western civilisation had successfully conquered the challenges which the natural world and other civilisations had presented, it was vulnerable to destruction from internal forces, the risk of war, exacerbated by the modern threat of nuclear annihilation. There is some ambiguity in Toynbee's work as to whether the West was irrevocably doomed to extinction as Spengler had surmised (Geyl, 1956). Perhaps Toynbee himself was not sure of the answer. He maintained the hope that

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<sup>22</sup> In his essay 'The Present Point in History' (1958a:32), Toynbee also distinguishes between civilisations, which have come and gone over the course of human history, and Civilisation (big C) which has successfully re-incarnated itself in fresh civilisations as old ones pass. He does not, however, elaborate on what constitutes the spirit of Civilisation in this context.

<sup>23</sup> In *A Study* (1/8), he identifies these as the Orthodox Christian Society in South-Eastern Europe and Russia; Islamic society; Hindu society and Far Eastern society in addition to the West.

<sup>24</sup> His work suggests that the United States is the most likely and attractive candidate for the role of the universal state.

disintegration was not inevitable; that the West could save itself through the correct inspiration and insight. That inspiration was spiritual and could only be found in religion (*A Study*:2/319). Furthermore, he suggests that if the West could avoid nuclear annihilation, it could provide the framework for a global, multicultural society.<sup>25</sup>

### ***The Boundaries of Toynbee's West***

Toynbee's conception of the West is shaped by his broad, historical perspective. He distinguishes between a medieval and modern West, with the modern West emerging from the collapse of Christendom as a political community; the emergence of humanism as the philosophy guiding perceptions of political community; and, in the twentieth century, the West moving from the modern to the post-modern age (*A Study*:2/308). However, the boundaries of the modern and post-modern West's evolve, and are moulded by the processes of growth shaped by its inner spiritual character, implicitly linking all three phases of development.

### ***Territory***

Territorial ideas are important to Toynbee's conception of the West in two key respects. Firstly, they help to locate the West as a community which emanated from the Mediterranean region and then proceeded to expand geographically. Secondly, they provide an important institutional dimension to Toynbee's West in the form of the territorial state. Toynbee saw the West's geographical boundaries expanding outwards over time. The genesis of the West is seen as occurring on the fringes of the old Hellenic civilisation. The 'backbone' of the West was the old Roman Imperial frontier running from Rome to Aachen and forming the core of the Carolingian realm. From this region, the political core of Western Christendom grew. The frontiers of the West expanded and contracted during the medieval Crusades. However, the consistent physical expansion of the modern West

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<sup>25</sup> Toynbee favoured some form of supra-national world government which would enable the West and thus, given the West's influence, mankind to rise above the then pervasive, parochial state politics (*A Study*:2/328). However, the failure of universal states of the past to avoid decline, and to provide world government provides a pessimistic precedent for any such endeavours on the part of the West. See Barraclough(1956).

commenced in the fifteenth century. Unlike Spengler, Toynbee embraced Renaissance Italy as the core of the West at this time. The influence of the Italian intellectual and administrative revolution is viewed as flowing northwards across the Alps to the Atlantic coast of the West where England and Holland assumed leadership of the Western world (*A Study*:1/232; 2/150). Furthermore, the Renaissance brought the revival and further evolution of the concept of the territorial sovereign state as the central political unit. An important feature of Toynbee's evolving West is the pronounced emphasis it placed on the territorial dimensions of political community:

The essential feature of the Western political ideology had been its insistence on taking as its principle of political association the physical accident of geographical propinquity. (*A Study*:2/222)

Toynbee treats the physical expansion of the West as a function of Western technological innovations and intellectual revolutions. Ocean navigation allowed Europeans to establish contact with previously unknown civilisations. Subsequently, the West grew as a territorial entity through colonisation. However, Toynbee does not automatically equate the spread of Western ideas and political control with the physical expansion of the West as a community. As he makes clear in his essay 'The Psychology of Encounters', Westernisation and membership of the West are not synonymous for him (Toynbee, 1958b). In *A Study*, only the countries 'occupied by Catholic and Protestant peoples in Western Europe, America and the South Seas' are cited as forming the geographic domain of Western Christendom (*A Study*:1/7). By the late 1940s, the centre of Toynbee's West was clearly shifting away from Europe and towards the United States, which Toynbee saw emerging as the West's universal state.<sup>26</sup> Toynbee, therefore, demonstrated clear conceptions of the territorial boundaries of the West.

### *Race*

Toynbee was sceptical of the way racial differentiation had been employed by the West; yet race still played a significant role in defining his conception of this

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<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, his discussion of the weakening of Europe and growth in stature of the United States in the post-war period in his essay *The Dwarfing of Europe* (1958a).

community. At the commencement of *A Study of History*, Toynbee dismissed race as a determinant of the growth of civilisations, rejecting links between superficial physical characteristics and the qualities which stimulate civilisational development (*A Study*:1/52). He had little time for notions of racial superiority and was dismissive of theories suggesting that civilisational decline is related to racial degeneration (*A Study*:1/249). The destiny of civilisations is determined by their responses to challenges, not predetermined by physical characteristics, he argues. He regarded the practice of stigmatising certain races as inferior as part of a process of dehumanisation applied by aggressive and ascendant races. Although dehumanisation might take religious, cultural or racial forms, Toynbee found the racial form the most despicable since it provides an insurmountable barrier to the discriminated. Foreshadowing the work of contemporary scholars, such as Edward Said, Toynbee argues:

In stigmatising members of an alien society as 'Natives' in their own homes, 'top-dog' is denying their humanity by asserting their political and economic nullity. By designating them as 'Natives' he is implicitly assimilating them to the non-human fauna and flora of a virgin New World that has been waiting for its human discoverers to enter in and take possession. On these premises the fauna and flora may be treated either as vermin and weeds to be extirpated or as natural resources to be conserved and exploited. (*A Study*:2/230)<sup>27</sup>

Although Toynbee did not see the West as constituted by a superior civilisation, he did see it as predominantly white. Whilst dismissing notions of racial superiority, he still employed racial differentiation. Whilst acknowledging the expansion of the West to encompass many other races in its global net of political and economic interests, Toynbee conceived of the 'dominant minority' of the West as predominantly white, with non-Western peoples forming the bulk of the West's 'internal proletariat' (*A Study*:2/99). In the latter stages of *A Study*, he appears concerned with the implications of racial differentiation for the West, speculating on the challenges which the successful 'Westernisation' of the peoples of Asia and Africa might pose to the West and Russia. He anticipates this might lead to

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<sup>27</sup> Toynbee argues that such discrimination was utilised by European peoples in their encounters with new and different societies during Western expansion.



demands for a more equitable distribution of territories and resources for the new powers. In the face of such a challenge, Toynbee speculates that the West and Russia might find common cause sufficient to override their ideological differences. In contrast to Spengler, who treated Russia as an Asian civilisation, Toynbee suggested that Russia might act as 'the White Man's Hope' against 'the Yellow Peril' (*A Study*:2/317). Although not necessarily advocating policies of racial inequality, Toynbee did employ racial distinctions in his analysis of world politics. He seemed less conscious of racial distinctions and affinities in the context of the Cold War. For instance, when constituting the 'free world' in antithesis to the Soviet Union, India is readily included as an ally of the coalition of the free world opposed to tyranny. Thus whilst Toynbee was not racist, his conception of the West entailed a racial dimension.

### ***Religion***

Religion in the form of Christianity, and particularly the Catholic church, is a fundamental force shaping Toynbee's West. The West is conceived of as a civilisation which occurs in the context of the Christian era, Western Christendom providing the antecedent to the modern West. He saw the Catholic church as playing a seminal role in establishing and enhancing the community of Western Christendom, facilitating the growth of nascent political institutions which came to characterise the West.

Firstly, Christianity is viewed as a chrysalis which linked the Hellenic with Western society. Toynbee's theory of history suggests that universal churches born out of the collapse of one civilisation in their turn nurture the growth of a new civilisation. 'Christianity had arisen out of spiritual travail that was a consequence of the breakdown of the Hellenic civilisation' (*A Study*:2/88). In its turn, it nurtured the new civilisation. It flourished in the spiritual vacuum of the declining Roman Empire, retaining its 'integrity' through the 'dark ages' to lay the foundations for Western achievements in economics, politics, and culture (*A Study*:2/82-8; Toynbee, 1958b:297).

Emphasising the strong links between Judaism and Christianity, Toynbee notes that Christianity was produced by a synthesis of elements from Hellenic and Syriac

societies (*A Study*:2/257-60). However, the civilisation which it nurtured proved homogeneous and relatively intolerant of other religions within its midst. This homogeneity was expressed in religious terms by the high level of religious intolerance which existed in Western Christendom until after the Wars of Religion; subsequently, it was expressed politically in the evolution of the communal homogeneity of the parochial nation-state (*A Study*:2/173-4).

Christianity also played a formative role in the territorial expansion of the West. It expanded both through 'peaceful penetration', absorbing other communities through conversion; and through military encounters such as the Crusades in which 'warriors consciously, and not entirely hypocritically, thought of themselves as extending or defending the frontiers of Christendom' (*A Study*:2/188).<sup>28</sup> Whilst medieval Christians were unable to consolidate the territories conquered during the Crusades, the encounters provided a territorial dimension to the conception of Christendom. Toynbee also notes that the battle with Islam provided some impetus for Western Europeans to explore the oceans beyond Europe's shores. Western reaction to Syriac pressure was the incentive for Europeans to push out of the Iberian Peninsula to Africa, Asia and the Americas. The 'Iberian energy' provided the 'mustard seed' which transformed Western Christendom into 'the Great society: a tree in whose branches all the nations of the Earth have come and lodged' (*A Study*:1/124-5).

Religion further helps define the boundaries of Toynbee's West in distinguishing it from the Christendom of the East. Toynbee traces the growing estrangement of the two civilisations which emerged from the old Roman empire; the eastern section traditionally looking to Constantinople as its political and spiritual capital, the western to Rome.<sup>29</sup> Both claimed to be the sole heir to the Christian universal

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<sup>28</sup> Toynbee defines the Crusades in broad terms as 'all the warfare of Western Christendom on its frontiers in the Medieval chapter of its history, against Islam in Spain as well as in Syria, against the rival Christendom of the East Roman Empire, and against the pagan barbarians on the north-eastern frontier' (*A Study*:2/188).

<sup>29</sup> The Roman Empire was divided into two sections in 395 A.D. after the death of the emperor Theodosius. In the West, the Empire was 'revived' first by Carolingian, then by German leadership. Toynbee points to a series of atrocities in the twelfth century which exacerbated tensions, leading to an irreparable breach. These included the massacre of Frankish residents of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1182 A.D., the sack of Salonica by a Norman expeditionary force in 1185 A.D., and the sack of Constantinople by Franco-Venetian forces in 1204 A.D. (*A Study*:2/193, fn.1).

church, and the Roman Empire, their interests clashing in a struggle for predominance in South Eastern Europe and Southern Italy:

These two Christendoms found it more difficult to come to terms with one another than with their Muslim neighbours. (*A Study*:2/193)

Toynbee highlights the mutual dislike of these two societies: 'To the Greeks the Latins were barbarians; to the Latins the Greeks were on their way to becoming 'Levantine'' (*A Study*:2/195).<sup>30</sup> This was exacerbated by ecclesiastical controversies which masked political conflict (*A Study*:2/194).<sup>31</sup> The divisions led to a breach between the two civilisations in the late twelfth century which widened until, in the fifteenth century, the Eastern Orthodox Christians opted for political submission to Turkish rule in preference to accepting the Latin Pope's ecclesiastical supremacy (*A Study*:2/195).<sup>32</sup> In Toynbee's eyes, the rivalry between Western and Eastern Christendom helped to further define the distinctive character and boundaries of Western Christendom, the forerunner of the modern West.

The Western Papacy grew in strength during the medieval era and, for Toynbee, contributed substantially to the political unification and identity of Christendom. The reforms of the Hildebrandian Papacy facilitated the creation of a *Respublica Christiana*. The constitutional doctrine of *Respublica Christiana* provided a spiritual unity which superseded temporal authority whilst simultaneously allowing the development of secular diversity and devolution that led to the emergence of the 'parochial sovereign state'. At its zenith,

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<sup>30</sup> Toynbee uses Greek and Latin literature of the tenth century to illustrate this mutual dislike. The impression of the Greeks conveyed by the Latin literature is of a miserly, inhospitable, deceitful people, over burdened with intellectuals. In contrast, the Greeks saw the Latins as coarse, impetuous, impudent and covetous (*A Study*:2/195-199).

<sup>31</sup> The breach may also have been aggravated by the shifting balance of power which in the tenth century had favoured the wealthy and politically unified Byzantine society. From the eleventh century, the formally agrarian and largely illiterate society of Western Christendom began to gain in economic and political strength (*A Study*:2/189-195).

<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, leadership of the Orthodox community was assumed by Ivan II of Russia, Moscow seeing itself as the new Rome. Toynbee noted that the attitude towards the West underwent a change in the seventeenth century when Serbs, Greeks and other Orthodox peoples began to look westward. They had suffered under the mismanagement of the declining Ottoman Empire and were attracted by Western ideas filtering in through various channels (*A Study*:2/154-5).

[t]he gossamer filaments of the Papal spider's web, as it was originally woven, drew the medieval Western Christendom together into an unconstrained unity which was equally beneficial to the parts and to the whole. (*A Study*:1/351)

Toynbee, then, saw the Catholic church as playing an important role in establishing the community of Western Christendom; in enhancing its growth and expansion; and in nurturing its unity at critical points in time. However, he did not view the modern West as a Christian, but as a post-Christian society. Ironically, the demise of Christendom can be read from Toynbee as a further formative force since it facilitated the rise of secularism.

The rise of secularism in the West was, for Toynbee, intimately related to the demise of religion as a political force (*A Study*:1/350). He links this demise both to the hubris of the papacy and to the disillusionment with religion bred by the religious wars of the seventeenth century, weariness with these seemingly futile conflicts producing a new sense of tolerance in Western society (*A Study*:1/300; 2/153). It also strengthened the secular tendencies that were evolving with humanism. For Toynbee, the spirit of humanism critically distinguished the modern from the medieval West:

From the Modern West's own point of view, its modernity had begun at the moment when Western Man thanked not God but himself that he had outgrown his 'medieval' Christian discipline. (*A Study*:2/150)

The Renaissance is a central moment in Toynbee's conception of the evolution of the modern West, which he saw as constructing a secular cultural heritage that eliminated religion. The growth of secularism in Western society is perceived as facilitating its expansion into non-European societies, Toynbee arguing that the nineteenth century secular West was more attractive to other societies than the seventeenth century religious variant.<sup>33</sup> However, he goes on to argue that the spiritual vacuum left in modern Western society by the exclusion of religion from

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<sup>33</sup> In his series of lectures *The World and the West*, delivered in 1952, Toynbee compares the course of Western expansion into the 'Far East', China, Korea and Japan, in the seventeenth century and nineteenth century. He contrasts the rejection of the West in its first coming with its more positive reception in the nineteenth century (Toynbee, 1958a:81-2; 1958b:269).

politics was filled by the ideologies such as liberalism, fascism, communism and nationalism (*A Study*:2/148).

As Toynbee's life and work proceeded, he modified his views on the relationship between religion and civilisations. He laid greater emphasis on the significance of religion in the cultural world order, eventually subordinating civilisations to religions by suggesting the breakdown of civilisations assisted and provoked spiritual progress (McNeill, 1989:188). Increasingly, he saw history as a process of spiritual revelation and an arena that provided the potential for progress.<sup>34</sup> He treated Christianity as the culmination of the advent of higher religions and became increasingly convinced that power politics could only be subordinated by religious commitment, which alone could supersede parochial interests (McNeill, 1989:219).<sup>35</sup> In the later volumes of *A Study*, he suggests that the West's best hope for salvation lay in the rediscovery of the Christian spirit that remained within secular Western society (*A Study*:2/319). Although he ultimately identified spiritual progress as an experience of the individual soul, he also sought in religion salvation for the West and for mankind more broadly. However, Toynbee's increased focus on religion somewhat obscures his concept of the nature and structures of civilisational interaction (Barracough, 1956:120).

### ***Power***

Toynbee's West is characterised by an unprecedented and largely unrivalled level of power (*A Study*:2/320). The source of this power is seen as both technical capacity and the spiritual capacity to meet a range of challenges and achieve self-determination. However, Toynbee's West, like Spengler's, is not primarily defined by its capacity. Power was again treated as much as a threat as an asset of the West.

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<sup>34</sup> In 1940, he wrote: 'If religion is a chariot, it looks as if the wheels on which it moves towards Heaven may be the periodic downfalls of civilisations on Earth. It looks as if the movement of civilisations may be cyclical and recurrent, while the movement of religion may be on a single continuous upward line.' Quoted in McNeill(1989:188).

<sup>35</sup> In this context, the chief challenge to man is that posed by God. See Toynbee's chapter on 'The Prospects for Western Civilisation' in *A Study*. See also 'Christianity and Civilisation' and 'The Present Point in History'(1958a) for an insight into Toynbee's tone.

The modern West is defined by Toynbee as maintaining a monopoly of world power until 1945 when it was finally challenged by the 'Western heresy' of Soviet Communism (*A Study*:2/148).<sup>36</sup> The emergence of the modern from the medieval age was marked with the consciousness of a sudden increase in power,

...including both power over other human beings, manifested by military conquests, and power over physical nature, manifested in geographical explorations and scientific discoveries. (*A Study*:2/200)

For Toynbee, technical prowess is a key element of the West's power, science a central element of its character. Even the medieval West is described as mechanically ingenious and 'disgustingly materialistic', and the modern era described as the era of the machine (*A Study*:1/242). Technological innovations in the field of locomotion are viewed as seminal in elevating Western civilisation to its position of power and influence. Shipbuilding and navigation techniques allowed the West to reach beyond the perimeters of Eurasia and familiar civilisations, allowing physical access to all the inhabited and habitable lands of the planet. Most significantly, the Western technological revolution knitted together the world of previously separate societies through innovations in transport and communications (*A Study*:2/23). Through these, mankind was transformed into a single society of world-wide range. The unification of the world, although not initiated by the West, had been completed within a Western framework (Toynbee, 1958a:69, 142).

However, whilst in some respects, the boundaries of Toynbee's West are delineated through its power in the sense of technical capacity, capacity as an indicator is treated with caution. Toynbee suspected geographical expansion and technical innovation could be misleading measures of a civilisation's development since both could continue to occur once a civilisation had begun to decline (*A Study*:1/190). The West was not necessarily immune from such trends. In addition, Toynbee like Spengler feared the damaging impact technology was having on

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<sup>36</sup> In both *A Study* and in his essay 'Russia and the West', Soviet Communism is described by Toynbee as a non-Western power pursuing an ideology which was a Western heresy, a secular ideology which had arisen out of the Modern West as a substitute for Christianity (*A Study*:2/148; 1958b).

Western society. He was concerned that modern Western society was becoming increasingly mechanised, bureaucratised, specialised and depersonalised, draining the spirit of creativity so crucial to a civilisation's capacity to innovate (*A Study*:2/334-9). In his later writing, Toynbee was very concerned with the threat of annihilation posed by atomic weaponry (Toynbee, 1958a:33-5); and with the impact of science at the spiritual level, implying that science and technology could be a source of hubris and complacency for Western civilisation. Furthermore, the satisfaction derived from scientific achievement is ultimately limited:

Man's intellectual and technological achievements have been important to him, not in themselves, but only in so far as they have forced him to face, and grapple with, moral issues which otherwise he might have managed to go on shirking. (*A Study*:2/99)

Processes of inner growth which empowered the West, the expansion of mental as well as physical horizons, were extremely important for Toynbee (*A Study*:2/150). This spiritual strength underlies a civilisation's capacity to meet the challenges presented to it.

The spiritual power of the West is demonstrated for Toynbee by its creative responses to a series of challenges. First came the challenge of anarchic barbarism which followed the collapse of imperial Rome; this was met with creation of an ecumenical ecclesiastical community, *Respublica Christiana*. The second challenge to Western Christendom was the need for a politically and economically efficient parochial state system. This was met by the resurrection and subsequent adaptation of the city-state system. The institution of parliament and the industrial revolution assisted in making this system one which was transferable to the rest of the Western world. Toynbee saw the replacement of economic autarky with an ecumenical economic interdependence as creating a third challenge which the West was in the process of facing in the mid-twentieth century (*A Study*:2/275-6). Toynbee questioned the West's capacity to meet these new challenges with innovative responses. He identifies the middle classes as a crucial agent in the generation of the West's growth:

...this Western middle class - this tiny minority - is the leaven that in recent times has leavened the lump and has thereby created the modern world. (Toynbee, 1958a:30)<sup>37</sup>

One of his concerns was that this creative minority was increasingly less able to fulfil this role, the regimentation and pressures such as taxation sapping the energy and creativity from this class. The question Toynbee poses was could the West survive without this creative minority? (Mason, 1958:64).

Thus for Toynbee, power as technical capacity is, only one measure of a civilisation's strength; mental and spiritual capacity are also crucial. He viewed Western power as unprecedented, but not inexhaustible, the West needing to draw more deeply on spiritual sources of power if it was to survive. Whilst power is an important feature of the West, its superiority to other civilisations is not described as a permanent condition. Toynbee was convinced that non-Western civilisations would ultimately reassert their influence, restoring an equilibrium of power to the cultural world order (Toynbee, 1958a:87, 142-3).

### *Institutions*

Toynbee was more inclined to discuss the central institutions of the West rather than the norms which underlay these institutions. He identifies two core sets of institutions as the foundations of the strength of the West; the sovereign secular state and parliamentary representation. Both are taken as demonstrating the West's capacity to innovate in response to challenges. As such, they are viewed as fundamentally parochial rather than universal institutions in that they evolved as responses to the challenges of particular eras.

Toynbee distinguishes the modern state which emerged in Western Europe as a community united on the basis of language rather than religion, and defined territorially (*A Study*:2/157). The roots of this form of political community lie in the demise of imperial and papal transnational authority in Western Christendom (*A Study*:1/350), and the subsequent rise of the Renaissance city state based on the

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<sup>37</sup> In fact, he argues that modern Western society is essentially middle class: 'Western communities had become 'modern' as soon as they produced a *bourgeoisie* capable of becoming the predominant element in society (*A Study*:2/185).



resuscitation of its Hellenic predecessor and the rejuvenation of Roman law.<sup>38</sup> Within the secular state, Toynbee further traces the evolution of the concept of constitutional government. Again, the Renaissance is perceived as central. Here Toynbee argues that Renaissance administrative efficiency fused with feudal institutions to establish institutions of parliamentary representation which themselves became the wellspring of political authority. It was a tradition which was widely imitated, as was the institution of the sovereign state:

...as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth, all the peoples of the Earth became possessed of an ambition to clothe their political nakedness with parliamentary fig-leaves. (*A Study*:1/238)

From the parliamentary concept stemmed modern democracy. He further links political and economic evolution of the West by arguing that democracy provided a propitious social setting for the invention of industrialism. Democracy and industrialism are treated as initially positive forces which helped to dismantle barriers between peoples and instigate growth.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout his discussion, Toynbee stressed the parochialism or relativity of these institutions, warning against the reification of ideas and institutions such as the state and parliamentary democracy. Again, whilst these institutions are seen as critical elements of the West's growth, Toynbee identifies within them the seeds of destruction. His first concern was that these territorially-based institutions were no longer capable of representing the contemporary political constituencies. The structure of parliament, he argues, is an assembly of representatives of local constituencies derived from a time when 'the geographical group was also the

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<sup>38</sup> Toynbee points out that the revival of the Code of Justinian in Eastern Christendom of the ninth century was originally aimed at underpinning a resuscitated Roman Empire. The rejuvenation of Roman Law in Renaissance Italy of the eleventh century did not assist the revival of the Empire but of the older Hellenic institution of the sovereign, independent, parochial state. He further argues that the enlistment of the new breed of civil lawyers into the administrations of the states was one of the causes of the progressive victory of the state over alternative forms of political organisation that may have emerged from Western Christendom (*A Study*:2/246).

<sup>39</sup> For instance, Toynbee argues that during the free trade era, industrialism had been a unifying force, helping to break down barriers between smaller, parochial units in the interests of greater trade efficiency and profit (*A Study*:1/288). It is interesting to note that modernism was also in essence associated with Western society in Toynbee's work where modern society and Western society often appear to be synonymous.

natural unit of political organisation.’ However, the impact of industrialisation was such that

...[t]oday the link of the locality has lost its significance for political as well as other purposes. ...The true constituency has ceased to be local and become occupational. (*A Study*:1/323)

Most striking is Toynbee’s criticism of the role of the state in modern world politics. He felt that the state, married with the forces of democracy and industrialism, gave birth to the ideology of nationalism which he viewed as an agent of strife and destruction:

Democracy collided with the institution of parochial (or local) sovereignty; and the importation of the new driving forces of Democracy and Industrialism into the old machine of the parochial state has generated the twin enormities of political and economic nationalism. (*A Study*:1/285)

Nationalism bred conflict and militarism. The impact of industrialism and nationalism, he argues, intensified conflicts to the level of total war engulfing whole national communities. Nationalism reintroduced the element of fanaticism into war which had receded with the conclusion of the wars of religion.<sup>40</sup> Industrialisation fed nationalism and, in addition, armed combatants with ever more destructive weapons (*A Study*:2/313). The state, now preoccupied with this ideology, has become the subject of strife rather than an agent of growth.

Underlying Toynbee’s criticism of the state and parliamentary representation was his belief that these were not universal institutions but institutional responses to particular challenges. The West was deluded by its own success into complacency, or what Toynbee calls ‘the nemesis of creativity’ which had contributed to the breakdown of other civilisations. Successful institutions of the past are reified, even idolised, but may be inadequate to innovatively meet the new challenges, consequently leading to a failure of self-determination (*A Study*:1/317-26). Toynbee believed the post-modern West had reified the ‘parochial state’ and parliament (*A Study*:1/322):

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<sup>40</sup> Toynbee cited the wars of the French Revolution being the first *modern* war (*A Study*:1/284).

Midway through the twentieth century of the Christian Era the Western society was manifestly given over to the worship of a number of idols; but, among these, one stood out above the rest, namely the worship of the parochial state. (*A Study*:2/312)

For Toynbee, this was 'a terrifying portent' since the worship of the nation-state was producing the type of fratricidal conflict which had torn apart at least fourteen of the twenty-one civilisations on record (*A Study*:2/312). Therefore, the nation-state was perceived as the source rather than the solution to the ills of the twentieth century:

We shall not expect to see salvation come from the historic national states of Western Europe, where every political thought and feeling is bound up with a parochial sovereignty which is the recognised symbol of a glorious past. (*A Study*:1/318-9)

Indeed, he advises that to survive as a civilisation, the West needs to adapt and change some of the very institutions which to many represented the core of the West. These institutions had allowed the West to meet challenges and optimise its own position but were not themselves sacred tenets, immune to revision. Like Spengler, Toynbee saw Western institutions as transient and evolving. However, Toynbee's West has the capacity to be more proactive than Spengler's, by moulding, rather than simply being subject to, the processes of change.

### *The Normative Dimension*

Although spiritual strength and innovation are critical dimensions to Toynbee's West, he does not discuss the underlying norms of the West in any great depth. Whilst he does not confine the West to any one set of ideas or traditions, democracy is represented as a central force in the West's political growth. However, Toynbee does not present democracy as a normative ideal, in fact his support for it is qualified, perhaps reflecting his classical education and a conservative attitude to the people's role in politics.<sup>41</sup> As McNeill points out,

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<sup>41</sup> Toynbee was seen by some commentators as reactionary for his comments on democracy and parliamentarianism. His concept of a creative minority can be interpreted as an elitist view of politics, echoing Spengler's faith in government through a leading minority or aristocracy. Stromberg argues that Toynbee's belief in the need for leadership via the creative minority is not necessarily anti-democratic, since the acceptance by the people of their leadership is crucial to Toynbee's theory.

Toynbee suspected that democracies had a tendency to become militant: 'Western states (including the United States) become more chauvinistic as and when their governments become more democratic' (McNeill, 1989:218).<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, he was concerned that democratic institutions and ideas transferred to new environments had proved vulnerable to manipulation by ideological or demagogic forces (Stromberg, 1972:79).

Toynbee did not present the West as constituted solely by the political tradition of democracy. His history acknowledges that it inherited the tradition of tyranny as well as democracy from its Hellenic ancestors, the Renaissance giving birth to the absolutist monarchies of Europe as well as constitutional governments. He traces the legacy of this more despotic form of government to the absolutist monarchies of Austria, France and Prussia, further linking this more authoritarian tradition with the evolution of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> Toynbee also acknowledges communism as a Western political tradition, despite its central proponents, the Soviet Union, being non-Western and using communism to challenge the West.<sup>44</sup> Viewing communism, like nationalism, liberalism and fascism, as secular ideologies that had arisen in the modern West as religious substitutes, Toynbee lays the foundation for his later thesis that the West will only achieve true fulfilment through a return to Christianity (*A Study*:2/148).

However, despite Toynbee's reservations about secular liberal democracy and acknowledgment of the existence of various political traditions in the West, his work as a whole indicates that he believed the liberal tradition spoke most fully to the norms of the West. These norms are identified in his later writings as opposition to tyranny and support of a 'free world'. In discussions of Russia and the West, for instance, Russia is characterised as a society resigned to a tradition of

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<sup>42</sup> Letter to A.E. Eurich, 15 August 1952. Quoted in McNeill(1989:218). This theory presents an interesting contrast to the popular theory that democracies tend to be more peaceable. He is also quoted as suggesting that an oligarchy with a sense of enlightened self-interest or a benevolent dictatorship offer the least bad forms of government.

<sup>43</sup> He also points out that the political institutions of the absolutist state had also been communicated to Medieval Western Christendom by the Eastern Orthodox Christendom through the agent of the eleventh century Norman state of Apulia and Sicily (*A Study*:2/200).

<sup>44</sup> Toynbee describes it as the Eastern Orthodox Christian universal state in Western dress adopted for convenience and disguise.

autocracy. In contrast, '[t]he great majority of the people of the West feel that tyranny is an intolerable social evil' which had been put down at 'fearful cost' when it had arisen within the West in the form of fascism and national socialism:

We feel the same detestation and distrust of it in its Russian form, whether this calls itself Czarism or Communism. We do not want to see this Russian brand of tyranny spread; and we are particularly concerned about the danger to Western ideals of liberty. (Toynbee, 1958b:239)<sup>45</sup>

Thus, while Toynbee did not see the essence of the West contained in any one institution or political tradition, he demonstrated an underlying belief in the West as a liberal culture which struggled against tyranny.

### ***Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

Both Toynbee's philosophy of civilisations and concepts of the defining features of the West were a major influence on how he read the course of interaction between the West and non-West in world history. Toynbee believed history should be broad and holistic. In order to understand one component or element, one must understand its relationship to the whole. He was not interested in the uniqueness of peoples, observed one commentator, 'it is the universal and the uniform which fascinate him'; patterns have paramountcy over detail (Fitzsimons, 1961:147). This comment, if a little harsh, does highlight the interest which Toynbee displayed in the interconnection and patterns of history. He found contemporary history too parochial and incapable of seeing the vital broader context; too narrowly focused on small units such as the nation state rather than societies or civilisations.

Whilst acknowledging that all historians tend to interpret history through the framework of their own society,<sup>46</sup> Toynbee was highly critical of the Western-

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<sup>45</sup> However, Toynbee was criticised for his treatment of the Soviet Union. Some felt his portrayed the Soviet Union as the victim of an aggressive West, others were offended by his portrayal of communism as a spiritual force, a Western heresy engaged in a spiritual battle with the West. See McNeill(1989:223) and Mason(1958:40-3) for an outline of criticisms of Toynbee's treatment of the Soviet Union.

<sup>46</sup> Toynbee relies upon the words of Herbert Butterfield to make this point: 'The men of a given generation are generally unaware of the degree to which they envisage their contemporary history within an assumed framework, ranging events into certain shapes or running them into certain moulds which are sometimes adopted almost as in a day-dream. They may be sublimely unconscious of the way their minds are constricted by their routine formulation of the story ... Amongst

centric focus of his contemporaries which presented a distorted view of the history of both the West and its fellow civilisations. In contrast, Toynbee sought to highlight how recent and even unexpected the West's ascendancy was. The West, he argues, had failed to achieve what its expansion had forced other societies to do; to transcend the parochialism of its own history and appreciate the interconnectedness of histories (Toynbee, 1958a:80-5). He further argues that the worldwide success of Western civilisation in the material sphere has fed misconceptions of the 'unity of history' involving the assumption that there is only one 'river of civilisation', the West's. He disputes the concept of a single, progressive history of mankind in the secular context, arguing that this was a result of Western 'cultural chauvinism'. He traces this parochial perception of history to three sources: an egocentric illusion in which Westerners perceive themselves to be a chosen people;<sup>47</sup> a perception of the East as unchanging and increasingly left behind by the West; and what Toynbee called 'the illusion of progress' (*A Study*:1/37-9). The urge to revolt against 'a current late modern Western convention of identifying the Western society's history with 'History' writ large' had prompted him to write *A Study of History* (*A Study*:2/303). In this study, Western civilisation is examined in the context of the genesis, growth and decline of other civilisations: the West becomes a representative rather than the focus of the historical processes.

However, despite his criticism of the excessive focus modern Western historians place upon the importance of their own society, Toynbee was not totally immune from the tendency himself. Toynbee saw the West as one of many civilisations, but also as set apart from its predecessors by the physical and technical extent of its growth and influence:

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historians, as in other fields, the blindest of all the blind are those who are unable to examine their own presuppositions, and blithely imagine therefore that they do not possess any' (*A Study*:2/266).

<sup>47</sup> See also 'The Unification of the World' where he discusses the egocentric perspectives of other civilisations: 'Every one of them was convinced that it was the only civilised society in the world, and that the rest of mankind were barbarians, untouchables, or infidels'. However, he noted that other societies had been shocked out of their parochial perception of themselves as uniquely civilised societies by the impact of the West. He observed that, ironically, the West alone maintained its parochial perception of its own civilisation constituting a 'Chosen people' (Toynbee, 1958a:70, 77).

...the expansion of Western society and the radiation of Western culture had brought all other extant civilisations and all extant primitive societies within a world encompassing Westernising ambit. (*A Study*:2/304)

Although Toynbee did not view the outcome of Western expansion as uniformly positive, he recognised the scale of its achievement as unprecedented. Its centrality in the cultural and political world order was further enhanced for Toynbee by the acquisition of nuclear weapons:

Thus a now ubiquitous Western society held the fate of all Mankind in its hands at a moment when the West's own fate lay on the finger-tip of one man in Moscow and one man in Washington who, by pressing a button, could detonate an atom-bomb. (*A Study*:2/306)

Therefore, Toynbee continued the tradition of perceiving the world as essentially divided between the West and the non-West.

Conscious of history's role in moulding a society's perception of the past, present and future, Toynbee sought to adjust his own society's unbalanced focus on its own importance in the greater schema of things, yet he was unable to escape preoccupation with the role of the West. However, his history provides a more complex picture of the West and of its relationship to other civilisations which shows the West in a unusual light: from his perspective, what might have seemed merely a difficult phase of Western history, once placed in the context of civilisational growth and degeneration, can be seen as a potentially fatal course. We find in Toynbee a conception of the West which is not one of unstoppable progress but potential disaster for the West and all mankind.

Toynbee understood history as evolutionary in the sense that it involved civilisations growing through meeting internal and external challenges. Civilisational interaction is depicted as a major component of such challenges. The interaction between the West and non-West plays a significant role in shaping modern world history; Toynbee's West both shapes and is shaped through civilisational encounters. He saw the West as 'apparented' by Hellenic civilisation, but no neat direct line of cultural continuity is drawn to connect them. Instead, there is the trauma of the stagnation and collapse of Hellenic society signalled in

the West by the collapse of the Roman Empire.<sup>48</sup> The 'agents' which transmitted the legacy of Hellenic civilisation to the West were the Christian church and, later, the Renaissance movement.<sup>49</sup>

Toynbee's West is affiliated to Hellenic civilisation, but it is not purely a product of Hellenism. It is conceptualised as a civilisation of its own creation, stimulated by responses to the challenge of the physical environment and its encounters with other societies. These included the medieval West's encounters with Islamic civilisation, with the Eastern Roman Empire, and its response to assaults from 'pagan barbarian' tribes who pressured Western Christendom from the north-east. The medieval West was not necessarily the stronger or more dominant force in these clashes, but Toynbee implied that its identity was shaped and directed by all these encounters. In the modern era, however, the West is portrayed as shifting from the recipient to the provider of challenges.

Toynbee's conception of history presents civilisations in a stage of growth putting pressure on those in decline. In Eurasia, he saw the West as the only civilisation in a stage of growth from twelfth century onward.<sup>50</sup> He argues that encounters between civilisations lead to cumulative changes within the weaker civilisation (A

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<sup>48</sup> Toynbee dates the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West to 378 A.D. with the 'catastrophe at Adrianople' (*A Study*:2/274). This marked the death of Hellenic civilisation in the West. Toynbee implies that this civilisation had long been in decline. In his essay 'Graeco-Roman Civilisation' (1958a) he attributes its breakdown to a failure to establish an international political order to replace the old political anarchy of the sovereign, independent city states. Such an order, eventually established under *Pax Romana*, came too late. This order persisted for four centuries, but in his essay 'The World of the Greeks and Romans', Toynbee depicted it as one which became a spiritual vacuum, collapsing eventually from the pressure of the new spiritual movements within and external attack on its frontiers (Toynbee, 1958b).

<sup>49</sup> Toynbee described the Renaissance as an encounter between a grown-up civilisation and the 'ghost' of its long dead parent (*A Study*:2/242). He noted that that the West had the advantage of receiving Hellenic culture in the provinces of art and literature through the medium of a live civilisation, ie. through contacts with Byzantine scholars (*A Study*:2/241). Classical philosophy and mathematics were retrieved via Arabic translations. It is also interesting to note his observation that the philosophical works of Hellenic culture such as Aristotle were available to the West in the sixth century, but that in this earlier period, comprehension was beyond Western Christian thinkers. This implies that the 'dark ages' of the West were as much a loss of the ability to comprehend as a loss of the material elements of Hellenic culture (*A Study*:2/253).

<sup>50</sup> Western Christendom had been stimulated by its encounters with other civilisations. These other civilisations were beginning to decline, a process furthered by the challenges which the West then proceeded to present. Toynbee argued that all the non-Western civilisations alive had broken down internally before they were broken in upon by the West (*A Study*:1/245, 265-72).



*Study*:2/226). This is illustrated by the processes of Westernisation, where the modern West overwhelmed those older yet weaker cultures. In some cases this led to the extermination of the non-West culture, as in Middle America (*A Study*:2/179). Other responses to the West varied between rejection and assimilation. Toynbee viewed attempts at outright rejection of the pervasive West as largely futile. He notes that attempts to borrow selectively from Western culture also proved futile, since the borrowing of one element of Western culture inevitably led to much broader Western influences, as had been the experience of Turkey under Sultan 'Abd-al Hamid II (Toynbee, 1958b:250).<sup>51</sup> Toynbee judged the most successful strategy was to embrace Westernisation as had occurred in Turkey under Kamal Attaturk, in Japan, and in Russia under Peter the Great (*A Study*:2/227). In fact, Toynbee interprets the subsequent growth of communism in Russia as a serious attempt to challenge the West through the adoption of Western techniques and ideology (*A Study*:2/153).<sup>52</sup> Therefore, even the greatest challenge to the West is perceived as in some respects, a product of Westernisation.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, Toynbee was scathing in his comments on the impact of Western institutions and ideas, such as the nation-state and industrialisation, on non-Western societies. He was particularly critical of the impact of nationalism. Here, he describes previously heterogeneous communities as riven apart by institutions devised in the essentially homogeneous West, primarily through the force of escalating linguistic nationalism. Toynbee argues that the nation-state is a natural product of the social milieu of Western Europe where different linguistic communities are distributed into fairly clear cut homogeneous blocks.<sup>54</sup> This social structure was a 'patchwork quilt' of communities. In contrast, Eastern Europe, Southwest Asia, India and Malaya comprise a multitude of linguistic communities woven into interdependent societies, divided, as in the case of the Ottoman empire,

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<sup>51</sup> See in particular Toynbee's discussion in 'Encounters with the Modern Western Civilisation' (1958a), *A Study* (2/151-188) and his essays in *The World and the West* (1958b).

<sup>52</sup> See also 'The Psychology of Encounter' in 1958b.

<sup>53</sup> Communism was perceived not just as a technical but also a spiritual challenge to the West, a battle for the leadership of the hearts and minds of humanity (Toynbee, 1958a:30-1).

<sup>54</sup> This could, of course, be regarded as a rather sweeping generalisation to apply to the diverse communities of Western Europe.

on occupational rather than geographic criteria. Toynbee compared such societies to a shot silk robe, closely interwoven and interdependent (Toynbee, 1958b:281-3). Efforts to construct nation-states in areas previously organised into heterogeneous communities frequently spelt disaster. In the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century, for instance, he argues that few communities had a population even approximately homogeneous in linguistic nationality or possessed the rudiments of statehood (*A Study*:2/157-9). In the east of Europe, he describes the 'deadly feuds' inspired by the 'evil spirit of Linguistic Nationalism' which divided the peoples of Poland-Lithuania in the nineteenth century. He continues, noting the 'baneful effects' of a Western ideology of nationalism' on communities in India and Palestine when radiated into the social environment in which geographically intermingled communities had previously managed to live together (*A Study*:2/223).<sup>55</sup>

Toynbee further laments the negative impact of the import of economic ideas, such as the 'demoralising' impact of Western industrialism on Southeast Asia (*A Study*:2/223). He was sceptical about the success of the transfer of institutions of parliamentary representation and unenthusiastic about the promotion of self-determination.<sup>56</sup> At the heart of this analysis is the assumption of the difficulties of cultural commensurability with Toynbee arguing that the transfer of ideas out of their indigenous context into new ones is inherently dangerous. A force which may have a positive impact in one context may be destructive in another:

...a culture-element which has been harmless or beneficial in the body- social in which it is at home is apt to produce novel and devastating effects in an alien body into which it has intruded ....  
'One man's meat is another man's poison'. (*A Study*:2/222)

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<sup>55</sup> See also 'Islam and the West' (1958b:255) on the division of India.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, he laments, 'the recent Continental offspring of the ancient insular institution of parliamentary government had proved a sickly brood, incompetent to bring political salvation to the non-British majority of the living generation of mankind, and incapable of holding their own against a war-begotten plague of dictatorships' (*A Study*:1/323). As Brewin(1992:117) points out, Toynbee was firmly opposed to the idea of the 'self-determined republic as the unit of history', valuing order over liberty where self-determination could lead to conflict. This is somewhat ironic given that self-determination is a quality which in the spiritual arena he saw as essential to a civilisation, but consistent with his critical attitude to nationalism.

Therefore, civilisational interaction between the West and non-West is treated as a critical factor in modern world history. The West was seen as uniting the world on the political and economic but not the cultural plane:

In the struggle for existence the West has driven its contemporaries to the wall and entangled them in the meshes of its economic and political ascendancy, but it has not yet disarmed them of their distinctive cultures. Hard pressed though they are, they can still call their souls their own. (*A Study*:1/8)

The non-West has been shaped by the West's presence and ideas, but the relationship is depicted as largely an unhappy one, with the non-West unable to successfully resist or absorb Western culture. Whilst uniting the world at one level, at another, the West had exacerbated global divisions through the spread of its ideas and institutions. At the same time the West's ascendancy was perceived by Toynbee to be relatively recent when viewed in the broad scope of history, and likely to be transient. Despite arguing that Western influence had permeated and shaped all other cultures, he anticipated the return to a cultural equilibrium in this now unified world, with the West eventually resuming a more modest position (Toynbee, 1958a:143.) Yet the 'scaffolding' of this unified world is built upon a framework of Western technological culture. On the one hand Toynbee denies the unification of the world at a cultural level, but on the other he suggests that the histories of cultures would become increasingly interwoven in this global society (Toynbee, 1958a:84-5).

This is an unresolved tension in Toynbee's work. On one hand, he argues that the West has influenced and altered all extant civilisations, irretrievably moulding the structures of an increasingly interdependent cultural world order, while retaining the capacity to shape or destroy the future of humanity. On the other, he suggests that the West itself is undergoing severe internal and external challenges and is likely to return to a less powerful position in a more balanced world order. The role of the West in the future cultural world order is somewhat unclear, as is the degree of cultural interdependence Toynbee anticipates from future interaction.

## *Conclusion*

Toynbee's concept of the West is deeply embedded in a complex and sophisticated framework of assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order. This complexity is not without significant tensions, both in regard to the cultural world order, and to the role of the West. For instance, each civilisation is seen as evolving through its own unique responses to challenges. At the same time, Toynbee identifies patterns of growth and breakdown to which civilisations conform. There are also tensions in Toynbee's changing attitude to religion. Whilst he continues to see the rise and fall of civilisations within a broadly cyclical framework, he came to view the evolution of religion as a progressive force. As McNeill points out, this creates a tension with regard to whether priority is to be accorded to civilisations or religions, to a cyclical or progressive philosophy of history (McNeill, 1989:227). Finally, there are tensions in the priority which he affords the West. He condemned the Western-centric focus of contemporary history but himself became preoccupied with the centrality of the West to world history.

These tensions arise in part from the lengthy period of time over which Toynbee's work was produced; *A Study*, for instance, was written over a thirty year period. His focus and preoccupations changed over time as the world which he observed changed. For instance, in the 1930s, Toynbee was deeply influenced by the negative impact which the transfer of Western ideas such as nationalism were having on contemporary world politics. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Toynbee's concern with nationalism is perhaps superseded by that of nuclear war, and the threat posed to the West, and the world, by the Soviet Union.

Despite these tensions, there are also important points of continuity in Toynbee's work. He retains throughout a focus on civilisations rather than states as the central driving force of human history. He maintains an interest in the pattern of civilisational evolution, offset by the capacity of individual civilisations to influence their fate. As with Spengler, Toynbee places his discussion of the West in a broader civilisational context, providing a distinctive perspective on the history and role of the West. In comparing the West's history to those of other civilisations, Toynbee, like Spengler, portrays the West as exceptional but still

consistent with the patterns of growth established by other civilisations, suggesting that the course of Western development is finite and under challenge. A further parallel with Spengler lies in Toynbee's perception of serious challenges to the West emanating from within; these include threats from technology; from the hubris which accompanies achievement; and from the parochialism bred by the West becoming accustomed to unchallenged ascendancy. Finally, both authors identify important challenges developing from the non-West. However, writing later than Spengler and in the context of the Cold War, the central challenge which Toynbee identifies is that of the Soviet Union. However, on the whole, Toynbee treats the impact of the West on the world as unidirectional, with the non-West suffering more from the impact of the West than vice-versa.

Therefore, there are interesting parallels between Spengler and Toynbee in their contextualisation and interpretation of the cultural world order and the West. However, there are also significant differences. In Toynbee's cultural world order, encounters between civilisations are not incidental; they are formative influences which can strengthen or weaken a civilisation. Civilisations consequently become a part of each others' history more clearly in Toynbee's work than in Spengler's. This is evident in Toynbee's discussion of the important relationship between Hellenic and Western civilisations. Secondly, whereas Spengler implies that the decline of the West, if protracted, is inevitable, Toynbee appears to hold out some hope for deliverance. This lies in part in the suggestion that the West might achieve salvation through rediscovering spiritual inspiration. Furthermore, he suggests salvation and progress, could be achieved, not just for the West, but for humanity.

Ultimately, there is some irony in Toynbee's focus on the West, despite his resentment of the Euro-centricity of contemporary history. His perception of the centrality of the West to the world is evident. It stems in part from the sheer scale of Western power; in part from polarisation of politics in the Cold War and the global consequences of nuclear confrontation. However, Toynbee also places the West at the centre of the world through his discussion of the West's establishment of a global framework. This appears to be largely a technical and institutional framework, rather than a cultural or normative one. This implies that the West has established an enduring framework for interaction amongst civilisations. In this

there are interesting foreshadowings of the concept of an international society found in the work of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull discussed in the next chapter. It suggests that, whilst the cultural world order remains a pluralist one, the West has achieved a unique position, a form of universality in the political world order, which will persist even should the West's retreat to the status of a 'normal' as opposed to a dominant civilisation. Ultimately, Toynbee's work suggests a cultural world order in which interaction between civilisations varies in nature, but forms a critical context for political evolution and interaction. It suggests that the West will remain an important component of this interaction, if not as a dominant force, then through the universal influence of its technical and political culture; but whether it will be a constructive or destructive force is unclear.

## *Chapter Five*

### *Internationalising the West: The Conception of the West in the Work of the 'International Society' School*

The legacy of a broad historical and philosophical approach to international relations found in Arnold Toynbee's work resonates in the work of the 'English School'.<sup>1</sup> Writing in the Cold War era, these scholars are characterised by their interest in the generation of international society. Their work seeks to explain the evolution of the rules and institutions of the modern states-system. Theoretically, their work is perceived as seeking a *via media* between the pure power politics of realism and the idealism of liberalism. They conceptualise modern international society as an outgrowth of Western civilisation, and interwoven with the political development of the European states-system. Their conception of international society is inextricably linked to the Western political experience. These authors have a multi-civilisational conception of the cultural world order, but perceive the West to be the central, formative influence shaping modern civilisational interaction through the structures of international society. This chapter investigates the extent to which the West is perceived as forming a universal civilisation in this context.

The chapter focuses primarily on the works of two authors, Martin Wight and Hedley Bull, whose work significantly developed the concept of international society. It also draws on the contributions of Adam Watson. Whilst each was

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent discussion of the history and composition of the 'English School', see Timothy Dunne's *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (1998, forthcoming). Dunne locates the birth of this school in the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics which was based at Cambridge and met from 1959-1984. It was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The committee was first chaired by the historian Herbert Butterfield, then Martin Wight, followed by Adam Watson and finally Hedley Bull (Butterfield & Wight, 1966: Preface; Watson, 1992:2).

distinctive in style and focus, all were committed to investigating international society as a central structure of international relations. These authors worked in association with one another, particularly in the context of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics. Wight, who has been described as the intellectual architect of the English school (Dunne, forthcoming), was a seminal influence on Bull and Watson. Their work addresses the question posed by Wight: what is international society? Bull's discussions of international society were developed within the trialectical framework of traditions of Western thought which Wight outlined (Wight, 1991). Watson's work on the evolution of international society (Bull & Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992) further developed Wight's analysis in *Systems of States* (1977).

Unlike Spengler and Toynbee, the exploration of civilisations was not the first priority of these authors. However, important assumptions with regard to civilisational interaction underlie their work. Similarly, although they do not set out to define the West, we can draw from their work assumptions as to the boundaries and nature of this civilisational identity. A number of works are considered. However the discussion does not attempt to examine all their themes, but focuses on concepts of international society, and of culture and civilisations in the context of international society raised in these collections.

### ***The Era and Influences.***

The work of these authors was influenced by the shared experience of working in the British intellectual community of the post-World War II era, and demonstrates common historical and philosophical interests. Martin Wight (1913-72) was an Oxford-trained historian. For most of his career, he was a teacher at the Department of International Relations, L.S.E. (1947-61) and then a Professor of History and Dean of European Studies at the University of Sussex (1961-1972). Often characterised as a perfectionist, Wight published relatively little while alive, many of his works being published posthumously. However, the original version of



*Power Politics* was published by Chatham House in 1946.<sup>2</sup> In 1958 he joined the newly established British Committee. Many of Wight's key essays were produced under the auspices of this group including 'Why is there no International Theory?' and 'Western Values in International Relations?' (Butterfield & Wight, 1966), and the essays collected in the volume *Systems of States* (1977). Many of Wight's ideas were developed and conveyed through his lectures to students, an edited collection which was published in *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (1991). In these, Wight outlined three traditions which are key components of Western thought; the realist, rationalist and the revolutionary traditions. The rationalist tradition is perceived as a tradition of prudence and moderation standing between the extremes of the pursuit of power and idealism which characterise the traditions of realism and revolution respectively. It is a tradition of thought central to the concept of international society (Wight, 1991:7-25).<sup>3</sup>

Hedley Bull(1932-85), by contrast, was a prolific writer. Born and raised in Australia, he graduated from Sydney University with a degree in History and Philosophy, then travelled to England in 1953 to study politics at Oxford University. He too joined the Department of International Relations at L.S.E. His career spanned teaching positions at L.S.E., a professorship of International Relations in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University(1967-77) and the Montague Burton Chair of International Relations at Oxford University(1977-85).<sup>4</sup> Bull wrote widely on international relations, foreign policy, strategic studies, arms control and international law. This chapter will focus on those works in which he discussed the foundations of international society,

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<sup>2</sup> The original, shorter version was published as one of the institute's 'Looking forward' Pamphlets. Wight was preparing an updated and expanded version of this work. A revised edition was published in 1979 after his death edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad.

<sup>3</sup> Wight treated these three traditions as a way of classifying ideas. They are not treated as incommensurable paradigms (Dunne, forthcoming; Griffiths, 1992). Wight saw all three traditions dynamically interwoven in the tapestry of Western civilisation. He was reluctant to identify himself with any one of these traditions, finding elements of all three within himself (Wight, 1987:227; 1991). Whilst Wight's earlier works, such as *Power Politics*, appear closely aligned with the realist tradition, his later work on international society and on the role of Western values suggest a growing tendency towards the rationalist tradition (Dunne, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Bull also held Visiting Professorships at Columbia University, New York (1970-1) and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (1974-5). In addition, in 1965, he was also appointed Director of the Arms Control Research Unit in the British Foreign Office, a position he held until 1977.

drawing on essays produced under the auspices of the British Committee; and on *The Anarchical Society*, his best known contribution to International Relations theory (1977). In his later work, Bull was beginning to explore more fully the relationship of the West to the non-Western world and issues of justice in world politics. *The Expansion of International Society* (Bull & Watson, 1984) and *Justice in International Relations* (1984c) are important sources for this discussion. Adam Watson (1914-), a former British diplomat and academic, worked with Wight and Bull in the British Committee and collaborated with Bull in producing *The Expansion of International Society*.<sup>5</sup> In 1992, he developed some of the themes of that volume in his monograph *The Evolution of International Society*.

These three authors knew and worked with each other in the development of ideas of international society. Wight was Bull's intellectual mentor. Bull was profoundly influenced by Wight's lectures at L.S.E. which he attended, and through their work together in the British Committee (Bull, 1966a; 1977b:28; Dunne, forthcoming). Watson cites *Systems of States* and *The Anarchical Society* as two significant influences to which he is indebted, and views his own work as a continuation of Wight's (Watson, 1992:3). The work of each of these authors is therefore distinct, but intertwined. They shared important influences and formulated their ideas within a similar historical and intellectual framework.

One crucial element of their common intellectual framework was their perception of international law as a basic element of international society. This perception echoes the ideas of the seventeenth century international lawyers who developed the concept of a community of states, governed by law.<sup>6</sup> They were viewed as foundational thinkers by Wight and Bull and their thinking is a central element of Wight's rationalist tradition. Hugo Grotius is particularly influential in the writings of Wight and Bull, Bull suggesting that the rationalist tradition in Western thought should be described as the Grotian tradition (Bull, 1966a; Dunne, forthcoming).

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<sup>5</sup> *The Expansion of International Society* is a collection of essays which was the culmination of the later work of the British Committee (Dunne, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> These include Suarez, Gentili, Pufendorf, Vitoria and Hugo Grotius (Wight, 1991:15, 37-40; Bull, 1977a:28-32). Bull describes the classical international lawyers as arguably the most important body of systematic theoretical writing on the theory of international relations (Bull, 1972b:49).

Grotius' work provided a secular rationalist basis for international law, a secular, universal moral order based on the rights and duties of states replacing the crumbling theocratic order (Cutler, 1991).<sup>7</sup> Wight saw Grotius' doctrine of the sociability of states as an important articulation of the idea that the state of nature could be social, as well as conflictual, thus providing the foundations for international society based on agreement rather than enforcement of a transcendental authority (Wight, 1991:38).

This interest in the maintenance of order was shared by contemporary scholars with whom Wight and Bull worked, such as Charles Manning, head of the Department of International Relations at L.S.E., and the historian Herbert Butterfield. Manning was interested in the states-system as a society governed by international law. He saw in the co-existence of states in the absence of central government evidence of the existence of some form of order (James, 1973:vii).<sup>8</sup> This order was maintained through mediums such as international law, diplomacy and the use of force. Whilst Wight and Manning were quite distinctive in their approach to the study and teaching of international relations, they shared an interest in the nature of international society and in international law as one of its foundational elements.<sup>9</sup>

Where Manning was interested to explore international relations within the realm of the social sciences, Butterfield's interest in international relations was firmly rooted in the historical tradition. Wight has been described as Butterfield's 'closest

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<sup>7</sup> A. Claire Cutler argues that Grotius provided a normative framework for the emerging states-system, attempting the first comprehensive treatise on international law based on state sovereignty (Cutler, 1991:44-7). Cutler goes on to outline important distinctions between the thinking of Grotius and of Bull and Wight who tend more towards positive rather than natural law foundations. She describes them as neo-Grotians. Vollerthun, however, questions the accuracy of including Grotius in the *via media* thinkers. She argues that Grotius does not view international politics as taking place within an international society. Whilst his writings acknowledge the existence of a law of nature and of a volitional law of nations, he fails to establish the existence of a society of states (Vollerthun, 1992:160-237).

<sup>8</sup> Manning has been described as a holistic thinker, conceptualising world society as an interconnected whole, with states as part of an overall system (Banks, 1973:197). Jones observes that this 'holistic' approach to international relations remains central to the work of the 'English school' for whom, he claims, Manning is 'a principal source of inspiration' (Jones, 1981:3).

<sup>9</sup> In *The Nature of International Society* (1962) Manning outlines his ideas of order and society. In contrast to Wight, and in many ways, Bull, he was keen to develop International Relations as a social science.

academic partner in intellectual history' (Coll, 1985:xiii).<sup>10</sup> Like Wight, Butterfield's reading of history was informed by his realism and his Christianity. His Christian pessimism suggested that man could not achieve salvation on earth and could therefore never achieve the permanent reform of the international system to eliminate strife.<sup>11</sup> He was therefore more interested in managing than abolishing conflict (Coll, 1985:6).<sup>12</sup> He was conscious of the ubiquity of power and violence in international politics but also believed that a sense of order existed. He described international order as 'a system of international relations in which conflict among member states was generally regulated and limited to protect every state against the loss of its independence' (Coll, 1985:5). Butterfield feared the totalitarianism that might be spawned by the centralisation of political authority in a single world state. He was therefore very much part of the philosophical *via media* which Wight describes.

The methodological approaches of these scholars also signals the influence of the intellectual traditions in which their scholarship evolved. Wight sought to understand events, structures and institutions through comparisons and precedents in history. In his early career, Wight was very much influenced by the work of Arnold Toynbee and his commitment to the study of universal history, even though he did not range as widely as Toynbee (Bull, 1977b:2).<sup>13</sup> Wight had a particular interest in European history from 1492. His analysis of international affairs focuses largely on this field and on classical history. Wight saw history as a way of

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<sup>10</sup> Butterfield was one of the chief instigators of the British Committee.

<sup>11</sup> See Coll(1985:73-7) for a brief discussion of Christian pessimism and history in Butterfield. There are significant parallels between his views of history and politics and those of Wight. Butterfield was a critic of the liberal progressive tradition and the underlying self-righteousness which this tradition implied (Dunne, forthcoming). He believed man should learn from the patterns of recurrence which history demonstrated. However, he also suggested that the evil innate in man and politics could be mitigated by, for instance, institutions. Dunne also reveals a sense of the potential for moral learning, and therefore implicitly some sense of progress in Butterfield's work.

<sup>12</sup> In their introduction to the volume of essays *Diplomatic Investigations*, Butterfield & Wight state that their underlying aim is: 'to clarify the principles of prudence and moral obligation which have held the international society of states together throughout history and still hold it together' (Butterfield & Wight, 1966:13).

<sup>13</sup> Wight worked with Toynbee at Chatham House (1936-8, 1946-9) on both the *Survey of International Affairs* and *A Study of History*. Both shared an interest in Christianity and sacred history.

understanding the human predicament, a 'prophetic drama' (Bull, 1977b:3). However, as Bull remarks, Wight did not treat history as a storehouse of precedents that can be discovered and applied as maxims of statecraft to contemporary political issues.<sup>14</sup> Instead, he sought to transcend specific problems to identify patterns of ideas underlying the historical process (Dunne, forthcoming).

Bull also valued history in the study of international relations (Bull, 1972a:256; 1972b:31-3). No doubt his respect for historical analysis was enhanced by Wight's influence. However, his own approach has been described as philosophical '[i]n its emphasis on the general premises, and the systematic discussion of the more general aspects of a topic, placing it in a broad intellectual context' (Richardson, 1990:179).<sup>15</sup> Richardson notes that Bull's approach reflects the influence of John Anderson, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Sydney (1927-1958). Anderson was renowned for his championship of critical thinking, free thought and questioning of authority (Kamenka, 1986:223-8; Miller, 1990a:2). We can see Anderson's influence in Bull's lucid, rigorous and logical approach to critical analysis.<sup>16</sup>

A feature of the work of Wight and Bull is the moral and normative focus.<sup>17</sup> In this, they were reacting to existing trends in International Relations theory. Both were sceptical of the 'idealist' perspective. Bull criticises the early 'idealist' theorists for their innocence, their facile optimism and their narrow morality which showed no awareness of the moral dilemmas of international politics (Bull, 1972b:36); but both were also critical of the realists for their exclusion of consideration of moral issues from their analysis.<sup>18</sup> Wight's approach to

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<sup>14</sup> In fact he attacked this as a methodological gimmick prominent in the writings of realists such as Carr and Morgenthau (Bull, 1991:xx).

<sup>15</sup> See Bull's discussion of Wight where he notes: 'Theoretical inquiry into International Relations is therefore philosophical in character. It does not lead to cumulative knowledge after the manner of natural science' (Bull, 1991:xxi).

<sup>16</sup> See Richardson(1990:176) for a discussion of Anderson's influence. Bull acknowledged that Anderson profoundly shaped his outlook (Bull, 1977a:x).

<sup>17</sup> Bull (1977b:17) notes Wight's work is distinguished by its emphasis on norms and values. Hoffmann notes Bull's interest in the moral basis of international society. He also notes Bull's rejection of the idea of value free inquiry (Hoffmann, 1990:19-22).

<sup>18</sup> Bull also criticises the realists for their fixed appeal to permanent laws and patterns which could not explain the drastic changes which had recently occurred in international life (Bull, 1972b:39).

International Relations evolved in part out of dissatisfaction with the methodology employed by realists such as Carr and Morgenthau. In their introduction to the essays of the British Committee, Butterfield and Wight remarked that in contrast to its American counterpart, British International Relations had shown itself 'more concerned with the historical than the contemporary, with the normative than the scientific, with the philosophical than the methodological, with principles than policy' (Butterfield & Wight, 1966:12). This approach is characteristic of the 'English school'. It stood in marked contrast to intellectual trends within International Relations in the post-World War II period in the United States where behaviouralism dominated the development of the discipline as a 'social science'.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the behaviouralists, Wight sought to rediscover rather than reject the literature of the past (Bull, 1991:xi).

Bull engaged vigorously and critically with the behaviouralist school, most notably in his debate with Morton Kaplan where he defended the employment of the classical methods of history and philosophy over the quantitative analysis of the new social scientists.<sup>20</sup> The historical and philosophical approach of the English school contributes to an understanding of the contemporary period within a capacious historical context. This approach critically underlies the broader interpretation of the West and the pluralist conception of civilisation found in the work of the international society authors.

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See Bull's critique of Carr in his essay '*The Twenty Years Crisis Thirty Years On*' (1969). See also Bull(1972b:39), Bull & Holbraad(1979:18), Richardson(1990:146), Dunne(forthcoming).

<sup>19</sup> Wight has been variously criticised and defended for his failure to engage with the new scientific approach. However, Bull argued that Wight had simply no point of contact with a school of inquiry which he viewed as anti-historical and anti-philosophical and thus of limited capacity to provide guidance to man's dilemmas in world politics (Bull & Holbraad, 1979:20-1; Bull, 1991:xi). Michael Howard described Wight's approach in these terms: 'For him, International Relations did not consist of a succession of problems to be solved in conformity with an overarching theory. Rather, like the whole of human life, it was a predicament: one to be intelligently analysed, where possible to be mitigated, but if necessary to be endured - and the more easily mitigated and endured if it could be understood' (Quoted in Coll, 1985:151).

<sup>20</sup> See 'International Theory : A Case for a Classical Approach' (1966c). For examples of criticism of Wight and Bull's methodology see Jones(1981) and Nicholson(1981). Bull & Holbraad defend Wight with the argument that engagement in the contemporary methodological debates would have distracted Wight from his main purpose of inquiry in International Relations (Bull & Holbraad:21).

These scholars were influenced not only by their intellectual but also their historical environment. As noted, their work demonstrates disillusionment with the idealist theories of the early twentieth century. The crises of the 1930s and the inability of the League of Nations to contain aggression discredited those who envisaged the construction of an international system where all conflict could be contained (Bull, 1977b:3). Despite being a pacifist and conscientious objector during World War II, Wight was pessimistic about what he saw as the realities of power and the inevitability of the recurrence of conflict.<sup>21</sup> This was in part due to Wight's Christian pessimism and scepticism about the possibility of achieving progress in the secular world (Bull, 1991:xvi). The expansion of revolutionary states, such as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, may have also reinforced their belief in the benefits of a pluralist international system over the single world state, which both noted as potentially totalitarian or tyrannical (Wight, 1979:81-94; Bull, 1966b:49-50).

Both Wight and Bull, then, were acutely conscious of the role of power politics in international relations, both past and present. However, despite the experiences of the 1930s, World War II and the Cold War, they did not adopt a purely realist reading of these events. Their perception of power politics was mediated by a concern for ethics and values, and an interest in the limits which states imposed on their behaviour through international law and institutions. It was also mediated by their historical and philosophical approach to the study of international relations. This provided a certain breadth to their work and a certain 'distance' from the contemporary. Their conception of international relations exceeds the Cold War environment in which it was written. All discuss the Cold War within a broad historical context. Wight, for instance, pointed to conflicts of the past which mirrored contemporary tensions (Wight, 1979:90; Bull & Holbraad, 1979:9; Bull, 1977b:7). Both Bull and Watson analyse its power relations from the perspective of the traditional concept of the balance of power and view the Cold War as a conflict occurring within the context of international society (Bull, 1977a:259; Watson

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<sup>21</sup> Wight's realism is demonstrated in his *Power Politics*, first published soon after the War in 1946, his realist 'turn' growing out of the failure of the League (Dunne; forthcoming).

1992:292-4).<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the conception of the West which emerges from the work of these authors draws deeply on historical antecedents. The West is not just considered to be a construct of the Cold War, but an identity which emerges from the intellectual, institutional and physical expansion of medieval Europe.

The broader perspective may also have been influenced by the location of these authors in post-war England. Britain's international perspective was not limited to the bi-polar relationship between East and West as defined by the Cold War, but involved broader global concerns. Its colonial history had produced a lengthy historical relationship and consequent awareness of the world outside Europe and the United States. This consciousness was heightened by the processes of decolonisation. The 1950s was the era in which the empire was dismantled and the Commonwealth founded (Miller, 1990a:4). Hoffmann notes Bull's increasing disillusionment with the superpowers in the 1970s and 1980s and increased attachment to the role Europe could play in international politics. This was in part due to the link which Europe had established with the Third World through its colonial past (Hoffmann, 1990:36).<sup>23</sup>

An awareness of international relations as something whose focus exceeded Europe and the European states-system is most evident in the work of Bull and Watson.<sup>24</sup> This awareness may have derived from Bull's life and work outside of Europe, in Australia. It was also stimulated by Bull's contact with non-Western colleagues and by travel, particularly trips made to India and to China.<sup>25</sup> These trips heightened Bull's awareness of the complexity, dynamism and difference of the

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<sup>22</sup> Wheeler & Dunne note that during the detente era, Bull invested the superpowers with the responsibility of managing international society. In particular, it was their duty to promote international order. He became increasingly disillusioned with their inability to fulfil such a responsibility, due to the depth of ideological antipathy. This disillusionment, they argue, qualified Bull's support for a pluralist, and strengthened his interest in a more solidarist conception of international society (Wheeler & Dunne, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Coral Bell has also remarked upon Bull's increasing commitment to Europe. Conversation, 1996, ANU.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, Bull repeatedly criticises Wight for his more narrow Euro-centric approach and Western-centric assumptions (Bull & Holbraad, 1979:12; Bull, 1991:xxii).

<sup>25</sup> Bull travelled to China and India in the early 1970s. He taught for a period at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi in 1974-5. Bull's perspective was also influenced by his contact with academic colleagues such as Sisir Gupta at ANU, and Ali Mazrui whom Bull met whilst he was a visiting fellow at Princeton in 1964 (Holbraad, 1990:190).



non-Western world and stimulated his investigations into the relationship between the two within the international system. These themes are pursued in the *Expansion of International Society* (Bull & Watson, 1984). His moral concerns brought a heightened interest in justice in the international system which he was beginning to explore in *Justice in International Relations* (1984c).

The concepts and assumptions which Wight, Bull and Watson brought to their study of international relations shaped the way in which they conceptualised the West as a formative influence in contemporary international relations, and provided the basis for their assumptions about civilisational interaction.

### *Conceptions of Civilisation*

The conception of cultural world order found in this literature recognises a plurality of civilisations: Western civilisation is not perceived as synonymous with civilisation in general, and various forms of civilisational interaction are acknowledged as occurring throughout history. Bull and Watson, for instance, note the operation of economic contacts and negotiations of written agreements between the traders and rulers of different societies and civilisations (Bull & Watson, 1984:4-5).<sup>26</sup> However, the level of global interaction achieved under the auspices of the Western political system is treated as unprecedented:<sup>27</sup>

What is chiefly responsible for the emergence of a degree of interaction among political systems in all of the continents of the world, sufficient to make it possible for us to speak of a world political system, has been the expansion of the European states-system all over the globe, and its transformation into a states-system of global dimensions. (Bull, 1977a:20-1)

Furthermore, the West is treated as providing not only a global political system, but also the foundations for a global international society. These authors acknowledge preceding international societies; but these are viewed as not occurring on the same

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<sup>26</sup> They acknowledged the existence of 'elaborate civilisations', as distinguished from 'less developed cultures' (Bull & Watson, 1984:2. Watson 1992:13).

<sup>27</sup> Wight, Bull and Watson all note the importance of cultural and/or civilisational foundations to the development of international society. However, none provide a clear definition or distinction of these terms. We might deduce that a civilisation is taken to be a broadly-based community which has reached a certain level of technical, political and intellectual development.

scale or complexity as the Western-based international society which had become established at a global rather than just a regional level (Bull & Watson, 1984:4-6).<sup>28</sup>

What, then, is the distinction between an international system and an international society? In Wight's work, no clear distinction is made between the two. In fact, Wight uses the terms interchangeably.<sup>29</sup> A states-system, he notes, is taken to comprise "sovereign states", political authorities which recognise no superior.<sup>30</sup> In defining a states-system, he combines the criteria that states should have more or less permanent relations with one another, with a second; that a system should comprise several contiguous states resembling each other in manners, religion and degree of social improvement and sharing reciprocity of interests.<sup>31</sup> Wight's definition of an international society shares with the international system the qualities of comprising sovereign states engaged in habitual intercourse, but it is more firmly rooted historically in Europe. In 'Western Values in International Relations' Wight defines international society as,

[H]abitual intercourse of independent communities, beginning in the Christendom of Western Europe and gradually extending throughout the world. It is manifest in the diplomatic system; in the conscious maintenance of the balance of power to preserve the independence of the member communities; in the regular operations of international law, whose binding force is accepted over a wide though politically unimportant range of subjects; in economic, social and technical interdependence and the functional international institutions established latterly to regulate it. All these presuppose an international social consciousness, a world-wide community sentiment. (1966a:96-7)

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<sup>28</sup> In the *Anarchical Society*, Bull cites the classical Greek state, the international system of the Hellenic kingdoms, the systems of China during the period of the Warring States and of ancient India as constituting international societies (Bull, 1977a:15-6).

<sup>29</sup> In *Power Politics*, Wight notes that international society has been variously called the family of nations, the states-systems, the society of states, the international community (Wight, 1979:105).

<sup>30</sup> Wight distinguishes between these systems and suzerain systems, where a suzerain power is the sole legitimate authority or secondary state-systems, and imperial systems (1977:23-5).

<sup>31</sup> He cites the Hellenic-Hellenistic and the Chinese (771 BC-221 AD) in addition to the Western states-system as clear examples of a states-system.

Hedley Bull clearly distinguishes between a states-system and a society of states. A system is formed where 'states are in regular contact with one another, and where in addition there is interaction between them sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other' (Bull, 1977a:10). Contact and a degree of interdependence are therefore criteria for a system. However, a society of states exists

...when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations to one another, and share in the working of common institutions. (1977a:13)

While his definition of a system is based on contact and is in essence empirical, his definition of a society extends beyond common interests to common assumptions and values which help shape institutions.<sup>32</sup> Bull separates the two forms of community which Wight conflates. Bull's definition of a society is less obviously, but still firmly rooted in the historical development of the Western states-system. It reflects the model established in Europe, and mirrored by only a few other communities in history. Watson retains Bull's distinction between a system and society. Whilst he accepts, all systems have rules, he suggests a society will also have certain unwritten codes of conduct, values, and non-contractual assumptions (1992:312).

Thus, each of these authors emphasises the role of common norms and assumptions as a foundation for international society. Further, they assume that these derive from a common culture or civilisational base. Wight remarks, 'we must assume that a states-system will not come into being without a degree of cultural unity among its members', noting that the three states-systems taken as

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<sup>32</sup> As Dunne notes, Bull's pluralist view of international society rested on the perception of a common good, such as the provision of order. Bull's early work suggests that order was provided by a pluralist international society in which there was a consensus on certain norms such as sovereignty and non-intervention. This plurality combined with limited consensus permits co-existence amongst heterogeneous communities. Dunne suggests that Bull began to move towards a solidarist conception of international society when he perceived that the pluralism was no longer providing order in situations of cultural and ideological heterogeneity. See Dunne(forthcoming), Wheeler & Dunne(1996) and Brown(1995) for a discussion of pluralism and solidarism in Bull's work.

paradigms all arose within a single culture (1977:33).<sup>33</sup> Bull is more concise: 'A common feature of these historical international societies is that they were all founded upon a common culture or civilisation or at least some elements of such a civilisation'(1977a:16). A common civilisation facilitates the working of international society in making for easier communication and better understanding between states, thus assisting the evolution of common rules and institutions. It is also assumed to reinforce the sense of common interests that impels states to accept common rules and institutions with a sense of common values (Bull, 1977a:16). Watson is also emphatic in linking civilisations with the common codes of conduct, assumptions and values that underlie an international society. These derived 'from a common civilisation which was dominant in the society, and which communities belonging to other civilisations could not be expected to understand or practise' (Watson, 1992:312).<sup>34</sup> He argues, for instance, that one factor which inhibited the admission of the Ottoman empire into *European* international society was its 'alien' civilisation which did not share European principles and assumptions in areas such as international law.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the new states of the

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<sup>33</sup> Vollerthun notes that Wight, whilst observing the importance of cultural unity in the establishment of a states-system, goes on to note the degree of internal cultural differentiation which has occurred in the Western states-system and the existence of three traditions in Western thought (Vollerthun, 1992:14). How does Wight reconcile these opinions? Elsewhere, Wight observes that the existence of ideological conflict does not necessarily disprove the notion of international society, given that it is often followed by ideological accommodation (Wight, 1966a:98). Thus, Wight does not assume that ideological divisions negate the cultural unity of a society. Further, he notes that despite the occurrence and recurrence of different traditions of thought in the West, there is one, the constitutionalist tradition, which is particularly representative of Western values (Wight, 1966a:91).

<sup>34</sup> In his work on the 'standard of civilisation' Gong notes the formation of expectations and shared precepts which over time become implicit in relations, such as the rules of conduct which evolved between European states. Only with the onset of intense interaction with countries that were unfamiliar with European codes of conduct did the need arise to explicitly articulate the codes and unspoken assumptions that underlay them. These, he argues, were articulated through the concept of a 'standard of civilisation' (Gong, 1984:36-8).

<sup>35</sup> Whilst it played a significant role in the European international system, the Ottoman empire was not admitted to the inner circle of international society until 1856, after the Crimean War (Watson, 1992:216-7). Watson goes on to conflate or confuse his distinctions by arguing that the Ottomans and Europeans formed a looser international society, sharing some common rules in their relations and working common institutions. See also Thomas Naff(1984) on the changing relationship between the Ottoman and European societies.

Americas found ready acceptance in European international society, given their essentially European cultures and forms of government (Bull, 1984a:122).<sup>36</sup>

This analysis of international society therefore treats civilisational homogeneity as a significant element in the constitution of international society. It implies that the formation of international societies have been intra rather than inter-civilisational processes, occurring within rather than between civilisations. European international society was formed amongst states of what we commonly call the West; Europe and colonies in which European culture predominated. However, the expansion of European international society to a global international society saw the creation of a society that was multicultural in composition. The 'admission' of the Ottoman empire to *international* society was followed by that of Japan and China, all non-Christian, non-Western civilisations. The global international society is therefore distinct in having a significant inter-civilisational dimension to it.

This raises the question of the position of the West in this society. At one level, Bull and Watson saw global international society as increasingly a synthesis of the various civilisations within it. However, at another level, they, like Wight, assume a priority for the West within global international society in a hierarchy of civilisations. In some respects, the globalisation of international society constitutes the universalisation of the West, or at least significant elements of that civilisation. The cultural unity of this society is seen to derive from the culture of modernity.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Barry Buzan(1993) argues that an international society can develop as a civilisational community, a *Gemeinschaft*, stemming from a sense of common sentiment, experience and identity; or as a functional community, a *Gesellschaft*, a community constructed without pre-existing cultural bonds through, for instance, the processes of intense interaction. Buzan suggests that Wight's conception of international society leans towards the *Gemeinschaft* model with Bull leaning towards the functional, *Gesellschaft* line. Bull, he suggests, neglects to discuss common identity as an element of international society. Buzan's analysis appears to neglect Bull's comments with regard to the significance of pre-existing cultural links to the foundation of international society. However, Buzan's identification of the two sources of international society is useful in understanding how the homogeneous European international society could expand to form a heterogeneous international society.

<sup>37</sup> See James Mayall on the 'imperative of modernisation' which has generated transnational ideas. According to Mayall, the widespread modernising mythology includes the spread of shared positions and aspirations that regulate participation in international society and include national self-determination as the basis of legitimate authority; a secular and materialist approach to social and economic affairs; a belief and desire for technological advance; and an ethical position which is notionally egalitarian (1978:133).

For Bull modernity implies the presence of a common language and a common scientific understanding of the world which is itself an outgrowth of Western culture (Bull, 1977a:39, 317). While he did not assume that modernisation led to homogenisation, it inevitably affected the societies it touched, Bull noting that even those who have revolted against the dominance of the West often supported modernisation and development (1984c:22; Shapcott, 1994:62). He implies the possibility of a cosmopolitan global culture developing, in spite of the Western cultural origins of the contemporary culture (Bull, 1977a:317).<sup>38</sup> However, he also implies that the culture of modernity as it stands is inadequate to continue to provide a genuinely cosmopolitan culture for future international society. His comments suggest that it is an elite culture, weakened by its lack of a common moral culture. This helps explain Bull's suggestion that the development of a future cosmopolitan culture may need to incorporate non-Western elements to provide the foundations for a genuinely universal society (1977a:317).

The authors of the international society school, then, recognise a plurality of civilisations and international societies in recorded histories, but allocate a privileged position to the West in that Western international society supplies the essential criteria for judging other international societies. This is most obvious in Wight who discusses international society as primarily the community constructed out of the Western states-system. All of the authors attribute significance to cultural or civilisational homogeneity in the formation of a society. The few other international societies identified had been essentially intra-civilisational.<sup>39</sup> The global international society prevailing today is distinguished by its inter-civilisational character. However, within this multi-civilisational entity, the West maintains a privileged position as the civilisation which shaped the initial assumptions and institutions of the society. This suggests a major unresolved tension in this literature since it suggests that contemporary international society is

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<sup>38</sup> As Shapcott(1994) notes, Bull identifies emerging common concerns, such as nuclear war and global environmental and population problems, that could form the basis for discussion on the notion of 'world common goods', founded on an interest in the needs of human society as a whole (Bull, 1984c:14).

<sup>39</sup> Although Watson describes Hellenic culture as a synthesis between Greek, Persian, Jewish and other near eastern elements (Watson, 1992:97).

simultaneously multi-civilisational and a construct of Western civilisation. Consequently, the extent to which other civilisations are subordinate to a broader Western civilisational context is unclear.

### *The Boundaries of the West in the 'International Society' School*

The West is conceptualised by these authors as the community which evolved out of European society, with the terms Western and European often used interchangeably.<sup>40</sup> However, with the expansion of a European into a global international society, the West is perceived as retaining a distinct identity within the broader community. We now turn to examine the boundaries that the international society authors perceived as marking the West.

#### *Territory*

The geography of the West in this literature is primarily constituted by Europe and territories in which European culture dominates. Three salient features of the geographical boundaries of the West can be identified. The territory of the West is linked to that of Western Christendom; it is linked to the evolution of the territorial sovereign state in Europe; and finally, the territory of the West is not viewed as static but as undergoing radical expansion.

The initial territorial expansion of the West is perceived as occurring under the auspices of religion. Watson maps the expansionary thrust of Latin Christendom, south and west against Islam; south-eastward toward the Holy Land, Syria and ultimately the Byzantine empire; and eastward into the south and east of the Baltic and towards Russia. Like Toynbee, he nominates the drive against Islam as the most significant in creating the momentum which drove Europeans overseas (Watson, 1984a:13-4). Furthermore, the expansion of the Castilians into the 'New World' saw the incorporation of these territories, administratively and conceptually into Christendom (Watson, 1984a:18-9).

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<sup>40</sup> Wight speaks mainly of the 'Western states-system' which developed in Europe. The West and European international society, as described by Bull and Watson, appear to be one and the same thing.

The territorial growth of the West is also viewed as a function of the expansion of the evolving European states, particularly the leading maritime, colonial powers in their quest for trade and power.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, as in Toynbee's work, a distinction is drawn between the expansion of the range of contacts which the West established, and the incorporation of new territories into the community of the West. Contact was not immediately equated with incorporation. Watson, for instance, notes that Portugal and the Netherlands interacted with powerful civilisations and societies in Asia, effectively becoming incorporated into the Asian regional systems rather than vice versa. This stands in sharp contrast to the relationship which Europeans established with the territories in the Americas which were incorporated first into the European system and subsequently into an expanded European international society. This is perhaps the first major expansion of the West as a community into non-European territories (Watson, 1984a:18; 1992:219). As Watson notes, this expansion was facilitated by the physical and cultural links that were maintained between Europe and these territories:<sup>42</sup>

What really and decisively made the settler states of the Americas consider themselves, and be considered, members of the European family was that they were all states on the European model, inhabited or dominated by people of European culture and descent. (Watson, 1992:268)

Bull treats the new American states as agents for the spread of the Western system (Bull, 1984b:218). The winning of independence by the United States and Spanish-American colonies marked the expansion of the originally European society of states beyond the geographical frontiers of Europe. Presumably, other white European colonies such as Australia and New Zealand were also seen as incorporated into the West by virtue of their cultural links. Therefore, a synergy can be seen in this analysis between the territorial expansion of the *European* society of

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<sup>41</sup> These included Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal. The core of the West is described by Wight as growing from Italy, to Western Europe, then Europe finally incorporating the members of the League of Nations, with ex-colonial states on the periphery of the system (Wight, 1977:42).

<sup>42</sup> These included immigration, trade and defence providing links which reinforced the shared culture and civilisation (Watson, 1992:220).



states and of the West. These territories remain the core of the West within the expanded, global international society.

The territorial conception of the West in this literature focuses on Western Europe and its colonies. Russia's relationship to the West is a problematic one. At points, it is discussed as a key member of the society of European states, at others, as constituting a different and distinct society. Both Bull and Watson note the important role which European expansion and influences played in Russian imperial expansion, establishing her as one of the five great sovereigns of the society of European states (Bull & Watson, 1984:218; Watson, 1992:225-6).

Yet there remains a sense that Russia is culturally distinct from the West. For Bull,

Russia ... has always been perceived in Europe as semi-Asiatic in character, a perception confirmed by the ambivalence in Russia's own mind as to whether it belongs to the West or not (Bull, 1984b:218).

This ambiguity is heightened by the oppositional role which the Soviet Union played to the West during the Cold War. The ideological constitution of East and West which characterised the Cold War is implicitly linked in this literature to an antecedent sense of differentiation. Watson parallels the Soviet imperial structure with the Byzantine *oikoumene* which was partly overlaid, but not lost during the era of Westernisation in Russia.<sup>43</sup> Wight even suggests that the Communist system constituted an alternative international society (Wight, 1991:50).<sup>44</sup> The ideological tensions of the Cold War therefore strengthened the sense of the West as territorially focused on Europe and its major colonial offshoots in international society analysis.

The territorial boundaries of the West are therefore viewed as arising out of the frontiers of Christendom but expanding under the influence of the Crusades, then of expansion by the European states. However, incorporation into the West is not seen as a function just of physical contact, but of a shared culture.

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<sup>43</sup> Watson describes the Byzantine *oikoumene* as a Christian society, but one quite distinct from that of Latin Christendom (Watson, 1992:107-11).

<sup>44</sup> In contrast however, Watson argued the confrontation of the Cold War occurred within the context of the global international society (1992:293).

## *Religion*

As in Toynbee's conception of the West, religion in the form of Christianity is discussed in this literature as the foundation from which the Western states-system emerged. European international society is seen as founded on the fragmentation of the unity Christendom.<sup>45</sup> The international society authors detail three ways in which religion in the shape of Christianity helped to define the boundaries of the West. The West inherited from Christendom a sense of community and differentiation from the outside; it absorbed certain qualities such as universalism which were seen as shaping its character; and the fragmentation of Christendom provided the political basis for the secular states-system.<sup>46</sup>

The West is viewed as inheriting from Christendom crucial elements of its civilisational identity, including a sense of community within and differentiation from those outside. Bull discusses the development of a concept of Christian international society by the natural law thinkers such as Vittoria, Gentile, Grotius and Pufendorf. They believed that a special relationship existed between the Christian states. Stemming from this sense of community was a sense of demarcation. As in Toynbee's conception of the West, this is traced from the distinction between *respublica Christiana* governed by the law which applied between Christian princes and states; and the broader human community, which the natural law theorists saw as governed by the principles of universal natural law (Bull, 1977a:29-30; Wight, 1977:125-8).<sup>47</sup> This demarcation is crucial to the concept shared by all three authors of an exclusively Western community of states which applied different standards, assumptions and expectations of conduct to those outside the community. These authors identify the Islamic communities which bordered Christendom as the principal external challenge. Wight observes

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<sup>45</sup> Mayall has argued that the Treaty of Westphalia marked an acceptance by the European princes that 'ultimate values', meaning religion, should not be a cause of war (Mayall, 1978:139).

<sup>46</sup> Christendom is discussed as a medieval hierarchical society which did not constitute a society of states but was linked by strong cultural forces. Wight notes that the distribution of power within this community eventually gave birth to conceptions such as the 'state' and 'sovereignty' (Wight 1977:27).

<sup>47</sup> Although the international society thinkers of the fifteenth century are distinguished from their universalist contemporaries who posited a unified community of mankind in the church (Bull 1977a:27; Cutler, 1991).

that this society was regarded by Christendom as 'a historical, even an eschatological, embodiment of evil' (1977:120). The Turk came to be identified as the anti-Christ, the sense of threat providing a point of common cause to an otherwise beleaguered and fragmented Europe.

This sense of differentiation which arose in the religious context was carried into the expansion of the Western states-system, according to Bull and Watson:

When Europeans embarked upon their historic expansion they did so with a set of assumptions about relations with non-Europeans and non-Christian peoples inherited from medieval Latin Christendom and ultimately the Ancient World. (Bull & Watson, 1984:5)

For instance, Watson surmises that the exclusion of the Ottomans from European international society was based at least in part on the fact that they were not Christians (Watson, 1992:216-8). No such religious barriers excluded the American colonists from the West (Bull, 1984a:122).

In addition to a sense of community, Wight argues that the Western states-system inherited its sense of universalism and missionary spirit from its theocratic ancestor. These qualities contributed to the dynamic, expansionary identity of the West. They were expressed in the Christian context in the Papacy, whose claim to world monarchy Wight describes as the earliest version of the assertion of European superiority. The Crusaders and the missionaries that proselytised in the medieval world, he suggests, were the forerunners of the conquistadors and gunboats (1977:119).<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, one of the defining features of the identity of the Western states-system was its secular nature. The states-system was founded with establishment of new grounds for the legitimacy of the ruler, and with the positing of universal natural law to replace the community of Christendom and papal authority.<sup>49</sup> Yet

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<sup>48</sup> Wight goes on to note that the lofty language of the Monroe Doctrine echoes ideas of the right of peaceful penetration into the infidel world and the right of interference to protect Christians or rectify misgovernment.

<sup>49</sup> Note Wight's discussion of the criteria for legitimacy coming to rest first on prescription but subsequently on self-determination (Wight, 1977:157-62). Legitimacy is defined as 'the collective judgement of international society about the rightful membership of the family of nations; how sovereignty may be transferred; and how state succession is to be regulated'. Until the French

the formative influence of Christendom cannot be forgotten. Wight reminds us that prior to Westphalia, the system was effectively shaped by the doctrinal conflicts of the sixteenth century. Thus, in the international society analysis, even though the Western states-system is characterised as primarily a secular system, the society to which it gave birth was perceived as strongly influenced by its religious antecedent in its assumptions about, and attitudes to other civilisations.

### ***Race***

Although religion plays an important role in these conceptions of the West, an equally important role is played by race. It is implicit from the outset that race is one of the formative boundaries of the West in the context of the international society analysis. However, it becomes more pronounced in their discussion of the expansion of the West from the nineteenth century onward.

Race appears to have little or no role in the theoretical construction of international society; in practice, the racial divide in international society is quite evident (Vincent, 1984a). European international society was predominantly white. The West as European international society, even as it expanded to the Americas in the eighteenth century, remained primarily racially homogeneous. Bull notes that the admission of the Americas to European international society was facilitated by the common European race and culture of the colonists. He also notes that the United States remained fundamentally aligned with European policies of racial exclusiveness in its denial of equal rights to blacks, its colonial expansion and treatment of indigenous peoples (Bull, 1984b:218).<sup>50</sup> It is only with its expansion in the nineteenth century, with the inclusion first of the Ottoman Empire and then of the Japanese, that international society becomes multi-racial.

There is, then, a perception in this literature that race implicitly contributed to the boundaries defining European international society; but there is also the perception

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Revolution, the principle of international legitimacy was dynastic; subsequently it became popular (Wight, 1977:153).

<sup>50</sup> Bull reminds us that the European settlers in America expanded this culture at the expense of the indigenous peoples, and that the rights of man proclaimed in the American revolutions were not in practice extended to peoples other than those of the European race (Bull, 1984a:122).

that as European international society expanded into a global community, race continued to differentiate West from non-West within the community. Both Bull and Watson remark on an emergent sense of civilisational hierarchy and European cultural superiority which accompanied the expansion of European power and influence in the nineteenth century (Watson, 1984a:27; Bull, 1984a:125). This was reflected in the legal relationship between West and non-Western states:

With the important partial exception of Japan, those racially and culturally non-European states that enjoyed formal independence laboured under the stigma of inferior status: unequal treaties, extraterritorial jurisdiction, denial of racial equality (Bull, 1984a:125).

Thus, the distinction between West and non-West is perpetuated within the global international society, a boundary drawn in part on racial grounds continuing what was effectively a dual system. For Bull, dismantlement of this system only really began after the Second World War with the major drive towards decolonisation.

It is with the discussion of the role of the non-West in international society, particularly in Bull's discussion of the 'Revolt against the West', that we see most clearly the operation of a racial boundary within international society, differentiating West from non-West. Watson comments on the resentment towards the racial and cultural superiority presumed by the 'white man' that was expressed within the decolonisation and Non-Aligned movements (Watson, 1992:297). Bull highlights the fight for racial equality, in particular opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa, as one of the defining themes of the 'Revolt against the West' which undermined the existing order:<sup>51</sup>

The old Western-dominated international order was associated with the privileged position of the white race: the international society of states was at first exclusively, and even in its last days principally, one of white states; non-white peoples everywhere, whether as minority communities within these white states, as majority communities ruled by minorities of whites, or as independent

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<sup>51</sup> See also Bull's (1982:265) discussion of the West's position with regard to South Africa in which he suggests that the South African situation presented a microcosm of the West's relationship with the non-Western world. In both cases, a privileged minority faced coming to terms with the non-white people who form the majority of the world's population.

peoples dominated by white powers, suffered the stigma of inferior status. (Bull, 1984b:221)

The revolt against white supremacism is acknowledged to have had profound consequences for the Western world and for international society. Here, then, the boundary of race in international society, differentiating the West from the non-West, is addressed specifically and acknowledged as significant.<sup>52</sup> It becomes most explicit in discussions of demands for recognition of equality by non-white communities in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century. The boundaries which the politics of race construct are, perhaps, more clearly described in the international society conception of the West than in that of Spengler or Toynbee.

### *Power*

Power is an important dimension of the West's identity for the international society school. The technical and economic capacity of the West is recognised as translating into dominance of the international system, enhancing the West's ability to shape that system and society. The West's power is seen to stem from the dynamism of European culture (Watson, 1984a:16). Thomas Naff highlights some of its central qualities in contrasting the late eighteenth century Ottoman empire to the increasingly strong European powers:

The Ottoman's concept of their state as an Asian-based land empire that grew by warfare against infidels remained entrenched, however myopic. On the other hand, in the preceding two centuries, several European nations had acquired overseas dominions through exploration, colonisation, and commercial expansion; had developed a secular rational outlook which promoted scientific discovery; and had produced technological industrial and agricultural revolutions, together with a new, more flexible economic system - and all of those achievements were linked with the rise of strong centralised monarchies. (Naff, 1984:151)<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Bull however did not idealise the politics of post-colonial societies, arguing that liberation did not lead automatically to liberal, democratic political societies. He also notes, for instance, that Western values have been subject to different interpretations in non-Western societies. For instance, the value of racial equality advocated in relations between whites and non-whites has often not been applied by developing countries to their domestic situations where racism is often practised against minorities (Bull, 1982; 1984c:8).

<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere in *The Expansion of International Society*, other contributors, including Michael Howard(1984) and Patrick O'Brien(1984), consider the military and economic factors in European power. Howard stresses the role of factors such as professional military forces and advances in

The economic and technical capacity of the West provides the foundation of its political power. Whilst Wight discusses the West primarily as a political system, he notes that commerce established the framework around which the political system grew.<sup>54</sup> Bull and Watson echo Toynbee in noting that European technical capacity produced the technological and economic unification of the globe, followed by European-dominated political unification in the nineteenth century (Bull & Watson, 1984:2). Bull, in particular, highlights the significance of technological advances that led to growth in communications, enhancing global integration (Bull, 1977a:273).<sup>55</sup>

The role of power as a feature of the West becomes more pronounced in this analysis as the impact of the Industrial Revolution is assessed (Watson, 1984a:27). Bull and Watson link the subsequent increased economic and military power with a change in attitude towards non-Western peoples. They link this consciousness of power to a growing sense of civilisational hierarchy, distinguishing the West from other civilisations. In this, they suggest that in the earlier period of European expansion there had been some loose sense of equality with other civilisations (Bull & Watson, 1984:5). However, in the nineteenth century, this gave way to notions of European superiority:

Europeans and Asians alike had long regarded preliterate peoples as primitive but redeemable if civilised; now many Europeans came to regard civilised Asians as decadent. In their eyes modern civilisation was synonymous with European ways and standards, which it was their duty and their interest to spread in order to make the world a better and a safer place. (Watson, 1984a:27)

The change in relationship, they argue, was demonstrated in the increased direct involvement of the West in the non-West.<sup>56</sup> In the nineteenth century, European

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weaponry in facilitating European power. Subsequently, the development of other technical skills, such as mapping, and medical knowledge, and developments in transport and metallurgy helped to maintain the technical superiority of the West over other civilisations.

<sup>54</sup> 'Commerce has cast a nimbus of activity and connexions round the political system, prefiguring as it were the next stage of its outward growth, whether that came about through colonial expansion or the admission of peripheral states to membership' (Wight, 1977:33).

<sup>55</sup> However, he further notes that a 'shrinking globe' brought new sources of tension.

<sup>56</sup> In the Americas, Europeans continued to dominate indigenous peoples and exercise what was a European culture (Watson, 1984b:127). In eighteenth century Asia, relations between West and

powers became more active participants in the direct affairs of colonies, and imperial rivalry heightened, leading, for instance, to the colonial partitioning of Africa.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, in this period, the West is increasingly demarcated by power as expressed through imperialism and dominance of the evolving international system. This analysis portrays imperialism and overwhelming power as crucial elements of the West's identity, expressed and legitimised through the idea of a civilisational hierarchy.

However, the conceptualisation of power found in this literature is not limited to material capacity. A critical dimension of the West's power for Bull was its command of intellectual and cultural authority, and of the rules and institutions of the international society, which facilitated the moulding of that society to mirror Western institutions and values (Bull, 1984b:217).

In the twentieth century, this domination of international society was weakened. The European states were challenged by the rise of new powers; by the destruction caused by World War I; the instability of the interwar period; and by the decolonisation process which gathered momentum in the wake of World War II (Watson, 1992:278).<sup>58</sup> Yet Bull and Watson suggest that whilst the West's, and particularly Europe's, dominance of international society diminished in the sense of willingness to directly engage in the affairs of other societies, it retained the capacity to influence the norms and institutions of the international society.<sup>59</sup>

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non-West were effectively looser and in some cases more egalitarian, with the rights and status of non-European rulers accepted in treaties and agreements.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, there was increased direct activity by the British in India, and the extension of direct Dutch rule in Indonesia and French in Indochina. The European exercise of power in Asia and Africa had been largely indirect: European influence was, in many cases, exercised through the enterprises of private companies; for example, the British in India and the Dutch in Indonesia (Watson, 1984a:27-9).

<sup>58</sup> Bull cites five factors which brought about the collapse of the old Western-dominated order. These include the psychological and spiritual awakening of the African and Asian people; the weakening of the will of the Western powers to maintain their position of dominance; the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union as a major power, and the creation of a more general equilibrium of power in the system which this brought about; and the transformation of the legal and moral climate of international relations in which the Third World groupings have played an important part (Bull, 1984b:224-7).

<sup>59</sup> As Watson points out, the West also retained a great deal of structural power. For instance, he draws our attention to Western dominance in the increasingly integrated global economy as



The international society authors therefore see power as an important aspect of the West's identity. It is expressed as technical and economic capacity but also through political dominance of the international system and the ability to establish key norms for the conduct of international affairs.<sup>60</sup> Wight's work and the earlier work of Bull has been criticised for omitting an economic dimension to their study of international society (Jones, 1981:2; Bull & Holbraad; 1979:16; Miller, 1990b:71-4). As noted above, their work entails important assumptions about economic and material capacity critically underlying the political and legal power of the West. However, the economic dimension of the West is not systematically explored in this literature. Bull's later work does demonstrate a greater interest in the significance of economic factors,<sup>61</sup> as do Watson's references to the structural power which the West maintains through its influence in international economic regimes; but overall, the conception of the West found in these authors focuses more intensely on political and legal structures, than economic capacity.

### *Norms*

The importance attached to norms and institutions in the international society school's conception of the West has been signalled above. They are perceived to be critical elements in generating a community's sense of identity, helping to define it by establishing the common assumptions, values and structures. These were seen to be generated from a common civilisational or cultural base. *Western* norms and institutions are viewed as deeply integrated into the norms and institutions of international society. This perspective is distinguished from those of Spengler and Toynbee in seeing globalised Western norms and institutions not as a superficial super-structure, but deeply integrated into a framework of trans-civilisational interaction.

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demonstrated by the influence of groups such as the G7, Western influence in institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, and control of aid and investment funds (Watson, 1992:304-5).

<sup>60</sup> The significance of power to these authors' conceptions of the West makes the neglect of consideration of capitalism in the work of Wight and Bull even more marked.

<sup>61</sup> His discussions of the significance of calls for distributive justice (1984c) and his concerns with regard to the potential impact of growing protectionism (1983) indicate that he considered economic power and stability to be key facets of international order.

While Wight demonstrates a sense of the synergy between international society as a *via media* and the constitutionalist tendencies in Western political thinking (Wight, 1966a), Bull and Watson explore the integration of Western values into contemporary international society more systematically. Global international society is narrated by Bull as deriving from a European international society, itself derived from Christian international society (Bull, 1977a:27-33). As the society expanded, certain shared values and assumptions relating to the conduct of international affairs acquired wider acceptance. Bull is emphatic in arguing that the conscious acceptance of these norms is a crucial element in transforming the Western-based system into a global society. Even though there has been a revolt against Western dominance in the twentieth century, this occurred *within* the context of international society, accepting the basic rules and institutions of that society (Bull, 1984a:124).<sup>62</sup>

Wight provides perhaps the clearest articulation of some of the Western values also found in international society. In his essay 'Western Values in International Relations' he discusses qualities often identified with the West; these include freedom and self-fulfilment of the individual. He considers the correlation<sup>of</sup> Western values with qualities such as tolerance, self-analysis and the scientific outlook (Wight, 1966a:89). He also identifies a persistent and recurrent pattern of ideas which are specially representative of Western values. One is the 'explicit connection with the political philosophy of constitutional government.' The second is the quality of what he calls the *via media*, the adoption of policies of moderation and prudence, the '*juste milieu* between definable extremes' (Wight, 1966a:91). For Wight this pattern of thought describes the Whig or 'constitutional' tradition of diplomacy.<sup>63</sup> Ultimately, only within the context of this tradition can international

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<sup>62</sup> Bull argues: 'The non-European or non-Western majority of states in the world today, which played little role in shaping the foundations of the international society to which they now belong, have sought naturally and properly to modify it so that it will reflect their own special interests. It should not be overlooked, however, that by seeking a place in this society they have given their consent to its basic rules and institutions' (Bull, 1984a:124).

<sup>63</sup> Wight argues that this tradition is exemplified in the works of Western statesmen, political philosophers and jurists including Suarez, Grotius, Locke, Montesquieu, Burke, Tocqueville and Churchill (Wight, 1966a:90).

society be conceptualised as a real and meaningful entity.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, Wight's conception of international society effectively occurs within the context of this 'rationalist' tradition which Wight describes as specially representative of Western values. Western values are thus inextricably linked with his conception of international society.

Bull also identified key values and norms which are characteristic of the West, but have been exported to non-Western societies. Central to his earlier work are the norms which underpin order in first European, then global international society. These include sovereignty and recognition amongst states, norms which facilitate cooperation and co-existence in an essentially anarchic international order (Bull, 1977a; Wight, 1977).<sup>65</sup> Bull's later work demonstrates a growing interest in norms relating to the difficult issue of justice, including racial and economic equality, self-determination, and freedom from intellectual and cultural domination (1984c:2-5). His interest was in part stimulated by the challenges which demands for justice from the developing world were presenting to the current international order. However, he maintained that the norms being used to challenge Western ascendancy of that order and achieve equality within international society had themselves been absorbed from the West (Bull, 1984c:5). His analysis suggests that Western norms which had distinguished and effectively discriminated against the non-West are now being used to reduce the privileged position of the West in international society.

### *Institutions*

For this school, institutions are the structures through which a society expresses common values and pursues common interests.<sup>66</sup> Like the norms of international

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<sup>64</sup> Wight argues that the realist tradition views international society as a fiction and the revolutionists view it only as a precursor for a cosmopolis, a world community of mankind. See Wight (1991:30-49).

<sup>65</sup> Bull states that the Grotian concept of international society, to which he subscribes, sees states as 'bound not only by rules of prudence and expediency but also by the imperatives of morality and law'. These imperatives enjoin 'acceptance of the requirements of co-existence and cooperation in the society of states' (1977a:27).

<sup>66</sup> Bull defines institutions as 'a set of habits and practices shaped towards the realisation of common goals' (1977a:74).

society, the institutions are founded upon those of European international society, therefore of the West (Bull & Watson, 1984:2). The basis of contemporary international society is the broader acceptance by non-Western communities of these institutions as the central channels for the conduct of international affairs. Bull emphasises the degree to which Western domination of the system was expressed through the rules and institutions of international society: 'The international legal rules, moreover, were not only made by the Europeans or Western powers, they were also in substantial measure; made *for* them' (Bull, 1984b:217).<sup>67</sup> The norms of sovereignty, equality and reciprocity central to the Western state-system were upheld by the rules and institutions of international law, through the operation of the treaty, conference and diplomatic systems. The most central of these were and are the institutions of the sovereign state and of international law. Also important are a diplomatic system and a balance of power.<sup>68</sup>

### **The State**

The territorial state is seen as the principal political institution of the West and its international society (Bull, 1977a:71; Watson, 1992:168). Bull defines states as 'independent political communities, each of which possesses a government and asserts sovereignty in relation to a particular portion of the earth's surface and a particular segment of the human population'. Sovereignty in this context implies supremacy over all other authorities within the community and independence from all outside authorities. Sovereignty thus has both an internal and external dimension (Bull, 1977a:8). Since no state recognises an external authority, all states share at least a technical equality, meaning the system comprises equal political communities (Wight, 1977:23; Bull & Watson, 1984:6-7). The position of states in the system is not constituted or legitimised by a supreme authority but by

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<sup>67</sup> Under these rules, Bull included the laws of state sovereignty, treaty law and rules on the use of force.

<sup>68</sup> The list of central institutions identified by Bull and Wight varies a little from text to text. These four are most consistently identified as core institutions. In *The Anarchical Society*, Bull also adds the conventions of war. See Wight(1966a; 1979), Bull(1977a:13).

by the reciprocal recognition of other states.<sup>69</sup> Therefore governance of the society derives from the compliance of the members with rules and the conduct of relations through consensual institutions (Bull, 1977a:34).<sup>70</sup>

This quality of sovereign, equal states is seen as the central element of the Western states-system, distinguishing it from most earlier systems.<sup>71</sup> It is also a defining feature of the international society established first in Europe, then on a global basis.

## **International Law**

Both Wight and Bull maintain that the existence of international law is one of the distinctive, if not unique, features of European and now global international society (Wight, 1977:51; Bull, 1977a:142).<sup>72</sup> The rules of the European, then global society of states were defined in the principles of international law. Wight saw in international law evidence of the existence of international society (1979:107). The evolution of international law as they described it draws both on the idea of a universal moral law inherited from Christendom, and from the law which evolved from the practices of states.<sup>73</sup> What is significant is that both traditions from which international law is drawn have their roots in Western political evolution.

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<sup>69</sup> Timothy Dunne has observed that both Bull and Wight conceptualise international society as a social construction. The practices of states effectively produce and reproduce the structure of international society: 'The sovereign state is the constitutive community of international society, one whose obedience to the norms of the society of states both reaffirms the identity of the sovereign state *and* reconstitutes the structure of international society' (Dunne, 1995:379).

<sup>70</sup> This does not exclude the element of force, as Bull points out and the concept of the balance of power acknowledges.

<sup>71</sup> The authors acknowledge that a system of equal, sovereign states was not unprecedented. Wight points out that the Greek city states and the Hellenistic kingdoms also constituted a society through claims and recognition of sovereignty. Bull & Watson also acknowledge the society formed by the Chinese states during the 'period of warring states' (Wight, 1977:23; Bull & Watson, 1984:6).

<sup>72</sup> The development of international law was not unique to Western-based international society, but the global scope of this law was unprecedented. Bull also distinguishes international law from other normative codes suggesting that the central rules of international society have the status of law, rather than just of morality. In addition, there is the sense that a strong, authoritative definition of the meaning of the rules exists (1977a:142).

<sup>73</sup> Both authors emphasise the significance of international law as customary law which applies to the relations between states (Wight, 1979:108; Bull, 1977a:68). See A. Claire Cutler for a discussion of Wight's and Bull's concepts of positive and natural law (1991:59).

These authors see international law defining the rules applied within and outside the community of international society. In this they draw upon the natural law thinkers and Grotius in particular. Although the natural law theorists argued that a legal community of mankind existed to which universal natural law applied, they still recognised a distinct community within, the community of Christendom. This inner circle was bound by the law of Christ (Wight, 1977:128; Bull, 1984a:119). Wight and Bull saw a continuation of this dualistic system European dealings with the non-Western world where different rules and obligations were applied.<sup>74</sup> Wight argues that diplomatic practice recognised the dual nature of the international system, drawing what he calls the 'lines of amity', outside of which the rules of international law did not apply to the activities and competition of Europeans.<sup>75</sup>

Bull argued that a decline of natural law thinking in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enhanced the West's sense of differentiation which it had inherited from Christendom. Focusing their thinking on international society as a society of sovereign states, legal theorists recognised that as states, these political communities had certain rights and obligations. Entities that did not satisfy the criteria could not be members. In effect, this excluded many non-Western communities such as the Islamic emirates and Oriental kingdoms:

By the nineteenth century the orthodox doctrine of the positivist international lawyers was that international society was a European association, to which non-European states could be admitted only if and when they met a standard of civilisation laid down by the Europeans. (Bull, 1977a:34)<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Wight and Bull discuss the debates with regard to the rights of non-Christians and non-Europeans under the auspices of natural law. Both point out that those such as Vitoria seeking to extend benefits of the protection of rights which natural law bestowed also served to justify the exposure of these peoples to commercial and diplomatic intercourse, often against their will (Bull, 1984a:120; Wight, 1991:71).

<sup>75</sup> Wight dates its commencement at the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis in 1559 (1977:125).

<sup>76</sup> Elsewhere, Bull argues that an actual international society came to replace a theoretical one when the European states began to perceive common interests in structures of cooperation and coexistence, tacitly expressed through common rules and institutions. A law defining a code of conduct between states, based on the practices of states, came to replace the theoretical doctrine of natural law. Bull observes that developments such as the exchange of diplomatic representatives; the adoption of common legal practices; and engagement in multilateral conferences were all crucial to this process (Bull, 1984a:120).

In order to achieve admission to international society, non-European powers were required to conform to European standards of structure and conduct, articulated through international law and popularly described as the 'standard of civilisation' (Watson, 1992:273).<sup>77</sup> The West's acceptance of the achievement of these standards by non-Western powers marks the expansion of the European to global international society.<sup>78</sup> Thus, international law became the agent which legitimised and internationalised the rules and institutions of the Western states-system under the banner of the 'standard of civilisation'.<sup>79</sup> The institutions of the sovereign state and international law are perhaps the most central Western institutions which provided the foundations of international society. They helped to define the identity of the West, but also to internationalise that identity.

## Diplomacy

Whilst all civilisations have known the use of ambassadors, for the international society authors the diplomatic system was the internationalisation of a distinctive Western institution critical to the functioning of international society. The practice of establishing permanent resident embassies is a Western European invention which Wight argues marks the development of the modern Western states-system out of medieval Christendom, extending to Asia, and then the world in the nineteenth century (1979:113).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Bull notes that by the early twentieth century, legal doctrine came to insist that political entities were entitled to recognition as sovereign states if they met the formal criteria for statehood, ie. there must be a government, a territory, a population, and a capacity to enter into international relations or fulfil legal obligations (Bull, 1984a:121). See Gong(1984) for the evolution of the concept and articulation of the 'standard' in association with the evolution of international law amongst Western legal publicists of the nineteenth century.

<sup>78</sup> Bull lists the representation of the Ottoman Empire at the Congress of Paris (1856) and the attendance of the United States and Mexico, in addition to China, Japan, Persia and Siam at the Hague Conference as signalling the process of expansion (Bull, 1984a:123).

<sup>79</sup> Keal has described international law as 'both a universalising discourse and a form of cultural imperialism that defined the normative foundations for the society of states created by the expansion of Europe .... International law reflects the normative order of the European states that made it'. However, non-Europeans were expected to conform. He further argues that international law distinguished between civilised and uncivilised non-Europeans, with Europeans holding a special moral duty to confer the 'benefits' of civilisation on non-Europeans. Effectively, the 'standard of civilisation' took on an increasingly juridical character (Keal, 1995:194; Gong, 1984:5).

<sup>80</sup> Bull considers the emergence of the diplomatic system to be very much an enlightenment phenomenon, the ambassador a representative of the rational and reasoning actor driven by interest rather than passion (Bull, 1977a:169-72).

## Balance of Power

A fourth significant international institution of the West identified by this school is the balance of power. It is again perceived to derive from Western antecedents. For Wight, the balance of power was a sophisticated central device for the defence of common interest in the states-system (1966c:149). Watson discusses the institution as a flexible device first developed in the Italian states-system to counteract hegemony (Watson, 1992:198-202). Bull describes the institution as a consciously maintained rather than a natural or automatic mechanism for the preservation of order which flourished in the eighteenth century European states-system (Bull, 1977a:106-12). The expansion of Europe is seen to extend this mechanism to manage European competition overseas (Watson, 1984a:26).<sup>81</sup> The concept remained current in the wider international society, despite its being discredited in the post-World War I period, and the rise of international organisations developed to manage the international order (Bull, 1977a:40).<sup>82</sup>

The state, international law, diplomacy and the balance of power are treated by this perspective as central institutions which established the procedures of the European society of states, and subsequently became foundations for the global international society. They can also be seen as parts of the West's identity which became internationalised. While 'objective' boundaries such as territory, and race appear to continue to distinguish the West as a distinct identity, certain of the normative and institutional dimensions of the West's identity appear more flexible. These are the elements of the West which spread and became internationalised through the structures of international society. As for Spengler and Toynbee, norms and institutions form a critical dimension of this conception of the West. However, the norms and institutions identified appear more firmly embedded in the modern states-system than in the preceding conceptions.

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<sup>81</sup> Watson notes that, initially, colonies were regarded as extensions of their governing states rather than independent actors within the balance. This altered as the colonies began to perceive that they held different interests and began to move towards independence (Watson, 1984b:135).

<sup>82</sup> Wight was disparaging of such efforts. He saw the alternatives to the balance of power as universal anarchy or universal dominion, neither of which he welcomed (1979:184).



## *Interaction Between the West and Non-West*

This chapter has noted that the international society authors have a pluralist concept of civilisations. Their conception of the West, however, is of a unique civilisational identity expanding on an unprecedented scale to establish a trans-civilisational system and subsequently, a global, multi-civilisational society. Within this society, the West appears to retain a unique and influential position. Do these perspectives perceive the West as eventually absorbing other civilisations, or is its position seen as one of only temporary dominance? It will be argued that in one sense, the dominance of the West exercised through the expansion of international society is perceived as a hegemony in the process of being challenged; but in another, aspects of the West's identity are assumed to have been universalised, exercising a progressive influence over the broader history of mankind.

The evolution of the Western states-system and the expansion of international society appear closely interwoven in these discussions, making it difficult at times to separate the identity of the West from that of the international society. Distinctive qualities of the West appear to shape the international society. Some of these appear to be unique: while other societies had a sense of law, none applied it on such an extensive scale, ranging across multiple regional boundaries (Bull & Watson, 1984:6). Similarly, no other society had extended to encompass the whole globe, whereas the Western state system provides 'the present structure of the political organisation of mankind' (Bull, 1977a:295).

However, this is not simply a story of the West shaping the world. In Bull's analysis, the evolution of the West and of the international society it formed are interdependent. Bull suggests that the evolution of the European system of interstate relations and the global expansion of Europe were simultaneous and interactive processes. For instance, the idea of states with equal rights did not fully evolve until the eighteenth century. The establishment of many diplomatic practices, such as resident embassies, only took place with the onset of European expansion. International organisations did not really evolve until the late nineteenth century (Bull & Watson, 1984:6). The relationship of the West to non-West during

this evolution underwent major changes. The emergent sense of civilisational hierarchy is perceived to have displaced relations of loose equality with other civilisations, helping to rationalise the West's dominance of those civilisations. In this analysis, the West's overwhelming power acts as a crucial element in defining the identity of the West with respect to other civilisations. This interaction helped to shape the civilisational identity of the West. Therefore, in contrast to Spengler's conception, interaction is not merely incidental, but constitutive of the West.

A clear distinction is made in the analysis of Bull and Watson between the expansion of the Western system and the expansion of the Western society of states. The system expanded through increased interaction between Europeans and other peoples, involving both incorporation and domination.<sup>83</sup> The expansion of the society implied the admission of new states into a community of technical equals. Although the boundaries of race or religion initially delineated Europeans from others, the technical criteria of the nineteenth century became standards of behaviour and governance, standards based on Western norms and institutions. However, difference was perceived in the now culturally loaded context of civilisation.

It is here that the inter-civilisational dimension of the expansion of international society becomes more explicit. In his essay 'The Theory of Mankind' (1991), Wight analyses the different attitudes of his three traditions to other cultures.<sup>84</sup> They range from the eradication or subjugation of the other civilisation to cultivation and tuition, or assimilation. All entailed a sense of the superiority of Western civilisation. All three attitudes are evident in the history of European contacts with non-European peoples. The international society analysis implies the eventual predominance of the rationalist approach, with a period of tutelage leading to the absorption of new communities into international society; but how complete

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<sup>83</sup> For instance, in his discussion of native sovereignty, Keal observes that in the course of the nineteenth century, attitudes to non-Western peoples shifted from some measure of recognition of their rights to virtual rejection on the grounds that only civilised peoples had rights (Keal, 1995:201).

<sup>84</sup> Wight's interest in the clash between imperial civilisations and their territories may have been stimulated by his work on colonial constitutions with Margery Perham at Oxford University during World War II (Dunne, forthcoming).

was this incorporation? While the expansion of European international society as defined by Bull was synonymous with the expansion of the West as a coherent identity, the growth of global international society is not equated with the West's becoming a universal culture. The preceding discussion suggests these authors sensed the persistence of boundaries and hierarchies within international society. While the creation of a global, multi-civilisational international society saw the West become a society within the broader society, the West appears to retain a distinct and privileged position.

According to Bull and Watson, the expansion of global international society brought about the dilution of Western control of international society. However, both note the use of Western norms and ideas by non-Westerners in their resistance to Western domination of the society.<sup>85</sup> The state, for instance, became a central mechanism for achieving political and legal independence, recognition and equality.<sup>86</sup> Bull stresses that the 'Revolt against the West' did not seek to overthrow the institutions of international society, but to obtain equality and independence of participation *in* this society (Bull, 1984a:124).<sup>87</sup> His analysis presents peoples seeking equality and liberty within a society based originally on Western culture, not emancipation from this society. He is, then, describing the effective globalisation of key elements of Western political culture. Whilst the West no longer directly controls international society, other communities are perceived as functioning in the context of Western civilisation. This suggests a

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<sup>85</sup> Bull argues that the decolonising countries of the Third World were concerned with not only rejecting but also learning from the West (1984c:22). The Third World's demands for equality and justice, argues Bull, took Western moral premises as their points of departure (1984c:5). He and Watson point to the commitment of the anti-colonial movements to the ideas of modernisation or development. Watson also discusses the importance which Westernised elites played in the drive to separate and independent statehood for Asia, Africa and Oceania (Bull, 1984c:22; Watson, 1984a:31).

<sup>86</sup> Bull believed this stemmed from the experiences which Third World societies had of being without the clout or credibility of being a state (1984c:7, 27).

<sup>87</sup> '[B]y organising themselves as modern states, by accepting the conventions of Western diplomacy, by participating in the international legal system and by assuming a leading role in the shaping of the international organisations that have proliferated since the Second World War, [the non-Western countries] have demonstrated their adherence to the international society and to cooperation in the working of its institutions not only in their relations with the Western states, but also in relation to each other' (Bull 1984c:33).

universalisation of Western civilisation, or more precisely, some features of it, through the channels of norms and institutions.

These authors concur that the normative consensus on which the global international society is based was founded on Western values. At the same time, Bull and Watson's work demonstrates a consciousness of the society's increasing heterogeneity and complexity, and concern for its impact on maintenance of normative consensus. As Dunne(forthcoming) observes, Bull's reading of the consequences of this heterogeneity for international order oscillates between optimism and pessimism.

Bull feared that core Western values were beginning to be challenged. As non-Western peoples became stronger, there was a greater inclination to adopt a rhetoric which set these values aside. A 'deep divide' now existed between the Western powers and the Third World on normative issues suggesting the threat of breakdown of consensus about common norms and values crucial to the cohesion of international society (1984b:224-8; 1984c).<sup>88</sup> In addition to contemplating a redistribution of wealth within the system, both Bull and Watson imply that it may be necessary to incorporate elements of other civilisations into the norms of international society in order to maintain the cohesion of a truly universal society (Bull, 1977a:315-7; 1984c; Watson, 1992:308).<sup>89</sup> Therefore, both the cohesion and the West's institutional and normative hegemony of international society were

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<sup>88</sup> Although Bull suggested that the developing world drew on Western values in pursuit of their own goals, he did not suggest there was consensus on how those values should be interpreted. He cites the challenges of statism, the lack of regard for the individual shown in some self-determination movements, the use of force, the lack of racial equality practised in some domestic environments, and different interpretations of economic justice as challenges which divided the developed and developing world (1984c:6-11).

<sup>89</sup> Dunne(forthcoming) suggests that, in part, this was justified by Bull on instrumentalist grounds: it was in the West's interests to strengthen justice in world politics in order to maintain order. But elsewhere, his discussion indicates that Bull's increasing disillusionment with the pluralist system's ability to provide a just moral order, this undermining the essential moral value of the society. In the Hagey Lectures, Bull is obviously grappling with the difficult problems of the tension between the goals of justice and order. Here, he notes that unlike the realist or revolutionary perspectives, the rationalist or liberal perspective privileges neither order nor justice, but sees order as 'best preserved by meeting demands for justice' and justice 'best realised in a context of order' (1984c:18). While he does not clearly commit himself to any of these perspectives, the concerns that he voices with regard to the political and moral implications of demands for justice, and the West's need to accommodate them, suggests that he favoured the middle way.

conceived by Bull as under threat from the multi-civilisational character of international society

However, at another, more optimistic level there remains some sense of the West as a universal force in the processes of international society, and a faith in Western-shaped international society providing a useful forum for civilisational interaction. While Bull acknowledges that the Western states-system is not the only possible form of universal political organisation, he suggests it is the only one which has succeeded in achieving a durable, global political system, providing the present political structure for mankind, 'and the common interest and values that underlie it'. In spite of its weaknesses and inadequacies, it is 'the principal expression of human unity or solidarity that exists at the present time' (Bull, 1977a: 21, 259, 295).<sup>90</sup>

Universalist overtones surface in Bull's discussion of international society. While there is not a strong thread of progressive history in Bull's work - he was anxious not to portray international politics as inevitably tied to the states-system alone or to the dominance of European culture - he does imply that development and progress have been linked to the expansion of the European system. The emergence of sovereign states, the rise of national consciousness and the adaptation of society to modern science, technology and economy are treated as universal rather than unique historical processes. The 'revolt against the West' is viewed as part of a broader forward movement towards human development (Bull, 1984c:23, 34). There is, therefore, an implicit linkage between the expansion of Western civilisation and the broader development of man.<sup>91</sup>

Wight, in contrast, saw international relations ultimately as an arena of 'recurrence and repetition' which was incompatible with progressivist theories (1966b:26).

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<sup>90</sup> As Bull notes, this system had survived challenges such as World War II and the Cold War. In their introduction to *The Expansion of International Society*, Bull & Watson argue that in asserting the importance of the West's achieving the present political structure which has united the world, it is not their perspective which is being Euro-centric, but the historical record (Bull & Watson, 1984:2).

<sup>91</sup> In the *Hagey Lectures*, for instance, he discusses national liberation movements of the non-Western world as echoing those of nineteenth century Europe and the West, suggesting that these peoples are going through similar processes of adaptation and development (Bull, 1984c:7).

However, despite his pessimistic belief that conflict and war were recurrent features of the international system, he does admit limited possibilities for change, as is demonstrated by his faith in the existence of international society as a set of institutions and norms which can help to modify international conflict (Wight, 1966a:98). International society permits managing, though not radically altering, the system as Wight sees it. In the conclusion to the original version of *Power Politics*, he observed: 'Powers will continue to seek security without reference to justice and to pursue their vital interests irrespective of common interests, but in the fraction that they may be deflected lies the difference between the jungle and the traditions of Europe'(Quoted in Dunne, forthcoming). This remark hints at a sliver of hope that politics can rise above the law of the jungle; but furthermore, that this hope resides in the traditions of the West. Wight's analysis implies that Western values are deeply integrated with international society and therefore deeply integrated with the current and future developments of world politics.

In the work of Bull and of Wight, the universalisation of the West through its norms and institutions appears deeper and more subtle than domination exercised by military, political or even economic power. This suggests that interaction consists of more than the West buffeting or overwhelming other civilisations, as for Spengler, and more complex than the relationships suggested by Toynbee. This perspective suggests that certain norms and values of the West have been integrated into the institutions of the international society, achieving a form of universalisation. Moreover, while the West is not portrayed as the only civilisation, it is portrayed as establishing normative and even, in the work of Bull, developmental criteria for modern humanity.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has argued that the international society authors have a pluralist view of the cultural world which acknowledges the interaction of multiple civilisations in both past and present world politics. While it conceptualises the West as a distinct civilisation in this context, it simultaneously sees it as the foundation of a universal community.

These authors share with Spengler and Toynbee a broad, historical perspective, although they focus more strongly on the emergence of the Western states-system. Like Toynbee, their conception of the West acknowledges important foundations in Christendom, particularly in the concept of community and the legal structures derived from this foundation. While religion is discussed as an important formative force, race and power emerge in the discussion of the nineteenth century as increasingly important distinguishing marks of the West. The intensification of interaction with other civilisations appears to coincide with a growing sense of differentiation, particularly in the realms of race and power. Race appears to blend with power to create a sense of civilisational hierarchy, expressed in the Western-based 'standard of civilisation'. The legacy of these boundaries provides a continuing sense of differentiation, but, paradoxically perhaps, this literature suggests that certain norms and institutions which distinguished the West in the 'standard of civilisation' have become intrinsic to the structures of international society. In a sense, they have become the agents of the universalisation of the West. At this level, the West has become a global civilisation.

In this, there are parallels with the concept of the West found in Toynbee's work. As for Toynbee, interaction is considered more than incidental to a civilisation's growth. For Bull in particular, interaction critically contributes to the constitution of the West; the West and international society evolving interdependently.

Like Toynbee, the international society authors perceive the West to be unifying the world through its technological capacity and dynamic nature. However, these authors go further than Toynbee in suggesting that the West has provided the normative and institutional framework of modern world politics. Through the structures of international society, the West has created a single, global political system and the context within which all civilisations function and interact. These scholars, however, do not argue that international society has created civilisational homogeneity. Within the context of international society, the identity of the West remains distinct. There is, therefore, an unresolved tension in this literature between the perception of the West as a universal civilisation, and as one actor in a multi-civilisational world order. Wight's work in particular implies an intrinsic link between Western values, the *via media* in international relations, and the

construction of international society. Bull's demonstrates concerns for the challenges posed by cultural heterogeneity and the need for a redistribution of power and wealth to maintain the cohesion of international society; yet he also suggests that the West's experiences illustrate a universal process of development, and that its institutions provide the foundations for international order and the dominant context of modern civilisational interaction. At one level, therefore, this is a conception of the West as a hegemon under challenge; at another, it retains a unique position as a universal civilisation in the contemporary world order.



## *Chapter Six*

### *History's End? Francis Fukuyama's Conception of the West*

In 1989, the American political analyst, Francis Fukuyama, heralded the end of the Cold War by declaring the victory of the liberal West over the communist East. He characterised the Cold War as an epic battle between two ideologies to determine the direction of man's evolution through the course of modernity. The West's victory represented the conclusion of this ideological evolution and, in this sense, the 'end of history'. While this particular thesis is highly distinctive, the concept of the West embedded in it illustrates broader trends in American liberal thought in the late twentieth century. These provide important insights into assumptions about the West and the cultural world order which can be found in this significant perspective. They are assumptions which stand in marked contrast to those of earlier authors such as Spengler and Toynbee in their faith in science and optimistic belief in human progress. The image of cultural world order which we find in Fukuyama comprises different cultures, but presents humanity as a whole engaged in a single, civilising process of development and modernisation. His assumptions about culture and civilisation are influenced by his belief in human progress, and his concept of civilisational interaction linked to levels of development and modernisation.

This chapter focuses principally on the concept of the West articulated in Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis first outlined in a short article, 'The End of History?', in the American journal *The National Interest* (Fukuyama, 1989) and later developed in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). The discussion will also refer to Fukuyama's later work on culture and economics, *Trust* (1995b). In the 'end of history' thesis, Fukuyama presents the West as a civilisational identity at the forefront of the civilising process. It provides not just a technical or normative framework for modern civilisational interaction, as

suggested by Toynbee and the international society school, but also the ideological model for human development. Fukuyama differs from Spengler and even Toynbee in his optimism regarding the transfer of ideas from the West to other cultures. Furthermore, whereas, Spengler's concept of the West focuses on German culture as the heart of this civilisational identity, Fukuyama draws his model of the West from the ideals and institutions of the United States. Unlike Spengler, Toynbee and Bull, he appears confident that the West is no longer challenged by forces in the non-West, but like them, he demonstrates concerns with regard to challenges to Western cohesion from within. While this qualifies his confidence in the West and its future, there is overall a strong sense of the triumph of the American way.

### ***Fukuyama's Era and Influences***

Fukuyama's thesis blends the influences of European philosophy with an analysis of the tumultuous post-Cold War world to produce a distinctive contribution to the debate on the role of the West in world politics. Whilst Fukuyama is an American of Japanese descent, his work is infused with the traditions of European philosophy. Raised in New York, he studied political philosophy at Cornell University with Allan Bloom and in Paris under the post-structuralist Jacques Derrida. He obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science (National Security Studies) from Harvard University and subsequently worked with the RAND corporation where his early publications chiefly related to Third World 'states of socialist orientation'.

At the time of publishing his 'End of History' article, Fukuyama was Deputy Director of the United States State Department's policy planning staff. Its publication coincided with the installation of the Bush administration and it was seen by some as representing the administration's views. This was a tumultuous time in world affairs with communism crumbling in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The pressure of economic and military competition had encouraged the instigation of new policies in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, such as moves towards reductions in military forces, which eased tensions with the United States. It also meant that the Soviet Union was increasingly unwilling to underwrite socialist regimes in the Eastern bloc. In 1989-90, reformist pressures ultimately undermined communist regimes in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and

East Germany, with the breaking down of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 providing a graphic illustration of the radical changes underway (Held, 1993a). Fukuyama's thesis anticipated the final stages of the collapse of the Eastern bloc. Outside Europe, popular pressure for reform climaxed in the Chinese Government crackdown of June 1989 on protesters in Tianan Men Square. The shifts in international strategic thinking facilitated moves towards resolving the seemingly intractable Cambodian conflict. Capitalism was booming in East Asia and finding new adherents in Latin America.

Fukuyama's proclamation of the victory of liberal democracy found a broad and attentive audience. His essay expressed the emergent euphoria evident particularly in the United States. The development of the essay into a book allowed Fukuyama to explore in more depth the ideas and philosophical foundations of his thesis and to defend it against critics from all political spectrums. Although the book retains a belief in the victory of the West over its ideological rivals, the sense of triumph becomes more muted, elaborating upon suggestions of a sense of foreboding in the 1989 essay. This foreshadows a shift in the winds of optimism of the mid 1990s. The collapse of communist regimes and the victory of the Gulf War in 1991 had suggested to some the creation of a New World Order of liberal democracy guided by American leadership, promising the fulfilment of Fukuyama's predictions. This optimism was shaken by growing instability in former socialist countries<sup>1</sup> and the debacle of the United States-led UN humanitarian intervention in Somalia. 1992 also saw the United States shaken by riots in Los Angeles following the Rodney King trial. In Europe there was escalating tension emanating from new right movements whose anger was aimed particularly at new immigrants. While Fukuyama had anticipated the continuation of conflict and the resurgence of nationalism, such events clouded, though did not obscure, the broader sense of triumph.

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<sup>1</sup> Conflicts broke out in Georgia, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan. Czechoslovakia underwent a divorce, bloody wars broke out in the former Yugoslavia, first between Serbian and Croatian forces, then within the state of Bosnia- Herzegovina. In Russia, Gorbachev was finally undermined by a hard-line coup. Its defeat confirmed the rise of Yeltsin.

Intellectually, Fukuyama's article illustrates a trend of optimism prevalent in the late 1980s which contrasted to the 'declinist' trend stimulated by the setbacks of the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> The article was 'propitious' both in articulating the American sense of triumph, and helping to explain the radical changes that were occurring (Knutsen, 1991:79). Held suggests that Fukuyama provided a sophisticated justification of the conservative policies of Western governments of the 1980s, such as those of the Thatcher and Reagan, celebrating the victory of the market and small government (Held, 1993a:257). Turning the focus inward, Fukuyama sought to define what liberalism stood for in the absence of its communist antithesis (Smith, 1994:2). However, his argument that the end of the Cold War represents the ideological victory of liberal democracy was disputed and provoked extensive debate. For instance, to the left his ideological legitimisation of the conservatives represented a tactic to prematurely close down ideological debate in the face of the Soviet Union's demise, marginalising alternative voices.<sup>3</sup> Sardar(1992) places Fukuyama's thesis in a broader Western tradition of totalising history, subjecting the history and experience of all to that of the West.

The sense of triumphalism which characterised debate on international affairs in the United States of the late 1980s contrasted with the tone of discussion of social cohesion. Problems such as crime, drug abuse, welfare rights and race relations helped to generate a broader debate on American values, one aspect of which is the debate over multiculturalism. In 1987, one of Fukuyama's mentors, Allan Bloom, published *The Closing of the American Mind* in which he criticised the dominance of cultural relativism and upheld the importance of core Enlightenment values of truth, inquiry and natural rights as crucial elements of the American education system and the American way of life. In the context of this debate, it is interesting

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<sup>2</sup> These include the outcome of the Vietnam war, the oil crisis and the trade deficit with Japan. Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1988) might be seen as a classic statement of the more pessimistic attitude of the 1970s to mid 1980s (Held, 1993a:254). See Huntington (1989:3) for a discussion of the optimistic spirit of 'endism' demonstrated in the 'end of history' thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Miliband(1992) and Peet(1993a:74) suggest Fukuyama is foreclosing the ideological debate by proclaiming the victory of liberal democracy without considering other ideological systems such as social democracy, or whether the success of liberal democracy is a localised phenomenon. From another perspective, Huntington questions the viability of universalising democracy as an ideology, raising doubts over the likelihood of democracies being established in the republics of the former Soviet Union (1995b:150).

to note that Fukuyama presents an image of the West which is homogeneous, essentially middle class and built around the ideals of the American constitution and its founding fathers.

The meaning of Fukuyama's thesis has been widely debated. In this discussion, it will be considered as a celebration of the triumph of the Western political system and ideals in the battle for the soul and direction of modernity. In this sense, Fukuyama represents a particularly American, liberal concept of the West in the late twentieth century. However, it is not without its antecedents. It draws on nineteenth century intellectual traditions of universal history, on theories of modernisation and development from political science, and on a American tradition of political idealism.

Fukuyama can be placed within a tradition of authors who seek to use history to provide a sense of place and purpose for humanity (Rosenberg, 1989:309). Like Spengler and Toynbee, he is interested in the processes of history, but in contrast to them, he is concerned primarily with the triumph rather than the decline of the West. Furthermore, his historical focus is largely limited to the modern era. Fukuyama places himself firmly in a tradition of linear and progressive history, along with his intellectual mentors, Hegel and Kojève.<sup>4</sup> He draws from these authors a sense that the material world is shaped by the ideas of man. History becomes the evolution of the human consciousness and ideas, moving towards a final stage of absolute consciousness (Peet, 1993a:66; Smith, 1994:11). This places Fukuyama in the modern, humanist, rationalist tradition which views the world as something not given by God, but shaped and produced by man (Burns, 1994:x). Fukuyama celebrates the triumph of the Western *idea*, a victory achieved through the medium of *ideas*, rather than military power (Knutsen, 1991:79). Fukuyama's reading and use of both Hegel and Kojève is variously applauded and disputed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Kojève was a French-Russian philosopher who taught at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris in the 1930s. It is Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, as preserved in the *Introduction to the reading of Hegel* (1969) on which Fukuyama essentially bases his thesis. Fukuyama was introduced to Kojève's work by Alan Bloom.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson suggests that Fukuyama marries Hegel's liberalism with Kojève's 'sense of centrality of hedonism to modern consumption', and the transitory nature of the national state (1992:332). Critics of Fukuyama's reading of Hegel include McCarney(1993), on the differences between the early and later Hegel, Knutsen(1991) as a critique of Fukuyama's understanding of Hegel, and Peet(1993a;

As Anderson observes, he borrows selectively from both to create his own, distinctive interpretation of history (Anderson, 1992:332). This discussion will not engage in a critical assessment of Fukuyama's interpretation of these scholars, but notes the lessons which he has taken from them in constructing his own concepts of history and of the West.

Fukuyama also acknowledges his debt to the work of Plato, in forming his conception of the human psyche, and De Tocqueville, whom he draws on for his reading of the role of community and emergence of democracy in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Finally, like Spengler, Fukuyama was influenced by Nietzsche in his insights into the potential tensions between liberty and equality within liberal democracy. Fukuyama is impressed by Nietzsche's psychological insight that bourgeois society will ultimately produce a resurgence of individuals who seek exceptionalness rather than equality. The blend of ideas from both Hegel and Nietzsche is interesting, given their different perspectives on the historical process. Hegel held a progressive, if dialectical view of history in contrast to Nietzsche's commitment to a cyclical view. The tension inherent in these two positions emerges in Fukuyama's final inability to totally commit to the idea that history has ended.<sup>7</sup>

Despite flirtations with Nietzsche, Fukuyama stands solidly within the liberal intellectual tradition. As Gourevitch(1994:118) notes, Fukuyama blends Anglo-Saxon liberalism with German idealism. Whilst he is critical of the rational materialism which he argues characterises the work of Hobbes and Locke, one cannot ignore their importance to the liberal ideas which underpin Fukuyama's thesis and conception of the West. Within the American intellectual tradition, Fukuyama articulates the political idealism and commitment to democracy and

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1993b). His employment of Kojève is applauded by Gourevitch(1994) and criticised by Lawler(1994). Whilst Knutsen dismisses him as Stalinist, Peet(1993a) seeks to rescue Kojève from Fukuyama's more conservative reading.

<sup>6</sup> Fukuyama suggests that his notion of *thymos* or spiritedness can be traced back to Plato's tripartite division of the soul (Fukuyama, 1992:163).

<sup>7</sup> Some commentators view Fukuyama's interpretation of Hegel on the end of history as inaccurate. For Peet, history never finally ends since it always remains a dialectical process (Peet, 1993a:72). Fuller describes Fukuyama's resolution of history as 'dialectics without tears'(Fuller, 1989:93).

capitalism which characterised Woodrow Wilson and F.D. Roosevelt (Farrenkopf, 1995). This is demonstrated in his faith in the institutions of liberalism and democracy as embodied in the American way of life, and his belief in the universal applicability of these ideas to create a more peaceful and prosperous world. His optimism consciously reflects the faith in progress, and in science and the spread of democracy which he finds in nineteenth century Europe and the United States (1992:4).

Fukuyama's faith in progress and development also echoes the works of Western, particularly postwar American, political scientists. Parallels have been noted between his thesis and the work of Daniel Bell(1960) concerning the impact of modernisation on 'the end of ideology' (Knutsen, 1991:78; Held, 1993a:255), but there is a different quality to Fukuyama's argument. Bell's argument is premised on an assumption that the pull of nineteenth century ideologies has been exhausted, not that one has been victorious over the other. He implies the convergence of the West with socialism in the institutions of the welfare state. For Bell, ideologies have lost their power to rouse people, leading to 'the end of ideology'.<sup>8</sup> Both authors, however, convey a sense of the *ennui* that they believe accompanies the end of ideological confrontation.

Further parallels exist between Fukuyama's work and development theorists, such as Gabriel Almond, who viewed modernisation as a process of development towards institutions established in the advanced industrial societies of North America and Western Europe. The problems of industrial society, it was suggested, had effectively been controlled and were being resolved within the structures of this model (Higgott, 1983:16).<sup>9</sup> Fukuyama's thesis also echoes theories of

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<sup>8</sup> Bell also differs from Fukuyama in arguing that the new ideologies appearing in Asia and Africa were distinctly different from those which had arisen in nineteenth century Europe. The old ideologies, he argues, were universalistic, humanistic, fashioned by intellectuals and driven by forces such as social equality and freedom. He saw the new ideologies of Asia and Africa as mass ideologies which were parochial and instrumental, driven by economic development and national power (Bell, 1960:373). For Fukuyama, the forces of nationalism and ideology being experienced in the developing world were similar to those experienced by the West in its process of development.

<sup>9</sup> See Higgott(1983) and Cruise O'Brien(1972) for a discussion of political evolution of modernisation theory. Both emphasise the role of the United States Social Science Research Committee on Comparative Politics, first under the chairmanship of Gabriel Almond, then of Lucien Pye in the study of political development. Scholars who contributed to the debate on modernisation

convergence which assumed that industrialisation and urbanisation gave rise to similar political institutions; and that industrialisation ultimately gave rise to affluence and mass consumption (Brzezinski & Huntington, 1965:10).<sup>10</sup> While Fukuyama does not trace the direct link between the processes of economic and political liberalisation suggested by these earlier theorists, he shares their faith in industrialisation as a key process which uniformly transforms and homogenises human societies. Therefore, Fukuyama's work can be located within a tradition of teleological development found in American political science.

Drawing on these varied traditions, Fukuyama produces a thesis which not only seeks to explain the meaning of the end of the Cold War, but it also carves out and rationalises a special role for the West in the world and in the future development of human civilisation.

### *Conceptions of Civilisation*

Fukuyama's conception of the West is embedded in a broader vision of universal history of which the central tenet is progress. He is concerned less with the details of civilisational interaction than with the broader march of development throughout the human community. The 'end of history' thesis is dominated by a belief in the existence of a universal and evolving community of mankind, with the West viewed as being at the forefront of this evolution.

Fukuyama uses the term civilisation in a variety of contexts, often associating it with terms such as Western, modern, middle class or consumer. He does not engage in a detailed discussion of comparative civilisations, except to compare the way in which Western liberal democracy and Soviet communism have sought to shape civilisation (1992:35). Despite the plurality of his use of the term, Fukuyama's thesis is premised on the idea of human civilisation on a progressive course, providing a strong underlying sense of a civilising process. His thesis is

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include Gabriel Almond, David Apter, Daniel Lerner, Samuel Huntington, Lucien Pye, Walt Rostow and Sidney Verba.

<sup>10</sup> Both factors were anticipated as undermining the role of ideology in political systems and encouraging political pluralism in the communist system. For a discussion of a variety of theories of convergence prevalent in the post-Stalinist era see Meyer(1970).



strongly influenced by a belief in the potential for further homogenisation of human societies, fostered by science and technology which, Fukuyama argues, inescapably link all of mankind today (1992:88); the accumulation of knowledge allowing mankind to progressively achieve greater control over his environment.<sup>11</sup> His optimism and faith in progress consciously recalls that of nineteenth century Europe. This optimism was grounded in faith that science would emancipate humanity from poverty and disease, belief in the spread of rational self-government in the form of democracy, and confidence that the spread of trade would make war obsolete. This faith in progress, shattered by the traumas of the wars and depression of the twentieth century, is rejuvenated by Fukuyama as he applauds the death of authoritarianism.<sup>12</sup>

Fukuyama's progressive vision of human civilisation is firmly based in a concept of history which is dialectical and finite. Whilst he acknowledges that History is subject to waves and setbacks, its broad course is directional (1995a). There is notably no sense of reversal of the overall progress of human civilisation. His concept of History is crucial to comprehending his ideas of civilisation and civilisational interaction. In marked contrast to Spengler, he defines History as 'a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times' (1992:xii). Drawing deeply on the ideas of Hegel and Kant, Fukuyama grounds his theories in the belief that all human behaviour is rooted in a prior state of consciousness (Gourevitch, 1994:112). Mankind evolves dialectically through different stages of consciousness, finally achieving a rational form of society, expressed in the state. Ideas shape the material world, therefore History is treated as mankind's ideological evolution (1989:4-6).<sup>13</sup>

Fukuyama suggests History is driven by fundamental human needs: the satisfaction of rational and material desires, and the need for recognition, or respect for the

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<sup>11</sup> Fukuyama consistently uses gendered language, referring always to the role and of man and his needs.

<sup>12</sup> 'As we reach the 1990s,' he argues 'the world as a whole has not revealed new evils, but has gotten *better* in certain, distinct ways' (1992:12).

<sup>13</sup> Ideology is broadly defined as encompassing religious, cultural and moral habits as well a political beliefs (1989:5).

dignity of each human being. These needs become the engines of History, stimulating processes expressed in political and ideological systems and movements. The first of these processes, the quest for the satisfaction of material needs, is fulfilled by application of natural science which represents cumulative knowledge with regard to the control of nature, turned to the productive requirements of mankind (1992:72-73). Science provides a concrete expression of mankind's capacity to shape the material environment through the application of ideas. The central role which Fukuyama attributes to science in his thinking places him firmly in the traditions of the Western Enlightenment. The unfolding of modern science provides for him a directional 'Mechanism' for explaining many aspects of historical development. It both satisfies material needs, through making possible 'the limitless accumulation of wealth' and, through technology and industrialisation, serves to homogenise human society: 'All countries undergoing economic modernisation must increasingly resemble one another' (1992:xiv).<sup>14</sup> This suggests strong parallels with the modernisation literature of the 1950s. Fukuyama argues further that the most efficient organisation of man's productive capacity is Western capitalism, since other forms of industrialisation have proved inadequate (1992:xv), societies will ultimately converge with, or submerge into the Western model of development. In this there are again echoes of the convergence theorists of the 1950s.<sup>15</sup>

Insightfully, Fukuyama observes that whilst the recognition of material needs is significant, it is not a sufficient explanation of human motivation. It portrays humans as primarily selfish individuals driven by rational calculation of self-interest, omitting man's 'moral dimension', the aspect of human character that is driven by the quest for prestige (1992:161). This provides Fukuyama's second central process of History, the quest for recognition. For him, the drive for

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<sup>14</sup> The homogenising process is linked by Fukuyama to industrialisation which rationalises organised labour, encourages urbanisation, increases the centralisation of the state, and weakens traditional forms of community, replacing these with modern bureaucratic forms of organisation (1992:77).

<sup>15</sup> For Fukuyama, the emphasis on satisfying material needs is a quality which particularly characterises what he describes as 'Anglo-Saxon' liberalism; the schools of thought deriving from the works of Hobbes and Locke in particular. It is, of course, also a central tenet to Marxist thinking.

recognition provides a richer understanding of the historical process through providing a deeper understanding of human motivation (1992:144). Basing his analysis on Hegel's parable Master-Slave relationship, he argues that the desire to be recognised as a human being, with a certain dignity and worth, is essential to all humans. Lack of recognition provides an impulse towards historical progress (1992:192).<sup>16</sup> Fukuyama equates this with the part of the soul Plato called *thymos*, the spiritedness which underlies the emotions of pride, self-esteem, shame.<sup>17</sup> He identifies two forms of *thymos*: *isothymia* which is equated with the quest for recognition as an equal; and *megalothymia*, the quest for recognition as superior (1992:182). Drawing on Kojève's influence, Fukuyama identifies the struggle for recognition as the central dynamic of the historical process. Most interestingly, Fukuyama interprets political and ideological movements such as religions, imperialism, nationalism, as part of a broader process of the quest for recognition. All are presented as the product of *thymos*.

Fukuyama's conception of History is crucial to understanding the assumptions about the structure and dynamics of the cultural world order which we can deduce from his work. In Fukuyama's conception of History, humanity's ideological evolution is part of a quest for the most satisfying society which contains no fundamental internal contradictions and constitutes the end of man's dialectical, ideological evolution. This social ideal is represented by the universal, homogenous state which provides equal recognition to all individuals. For Hegel,

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<sup>16</sup> The initial division between master and slave was based on the warrior ethos, the masters who were willing to risk their lives, and the slave who were not (1992:147-8). Fukuyama cites Hegel as arguing that the relationship between master and slave is dissatisfying for both; the master is not recognised by one whom he considers an equal; the slave is not recognised as one of equal dignity and worth. For the slave, growing self-awareness achieved through work and education leads to reflection on his own condition and the conception of the idea of freedom. The slave achieves freedom on attaining an absolute sense of knowledge and self-consciousness. The historical process is propelled by the movement towards this absolute self-consciousness. It climaxed in the French Revolution, based on the principles of liberty and equality, the foundations of the liberal democratic state. This was the battle in which the slave ultimately liberated himself from the master. For this reason, Hegel proclaimed the Battle of Jena(1806) as the end of History (1992:64, 192-8). A number of commentators argue that Hegel was more conservative in his assessment of the consequences of the French Revolution in his later years (McCarney, 1993:52, Farrenkopf, 1995:70).

<sup>17</sup> In the *Republic*, Plato analysed the soul as comprising three parts: the desiring part; the reasoning part; and the spirited part, *thymos* (Fukuyama, 1992:xvi). As with the other sources on whom he draws, Fukuyama has been criticised for his reading of Plato (Halliday 1992:93).

the ideological evolution of humanity was completed in the victory of the ideals of the French and American revolutions. For Kojève, they were achieved in the states of Western Europe post-World War II, and in 'the American way of life' (1989:5).<sup>18</sup> For Fukuyama, the end of history was achieved in the victory of Western liberal democracy and the defeat of rival ideologies in the Cold War. This allows him to interpret the end of the Cold War as 'the end of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government' (1989:4). Fukuyama portrays the Cold War as a competition between two rival modern systems or ideologies to determine the direction and systemic shape of human civilisation, progressing along the course of modernisation. From this perspective, the Cold War becomes a battle for modernity.

Fukuyama therefore suggests that the West provides a universal and satisfying model of society. However, inequalities and dissatisfaction continue to exist in the West, particularly with regard to issues such as race and distribution of wealth. This forces Fukuyama to concede that no regime, including liberal democracy, is perfect, fully satisfying all parts of all men simultaneously (1992:337). Therefore,

[w]hat is emerging victorious ... is not so much liberal practice, as the liberal *idea*. That is to say, for a very large part of the world, there is now no ideology with pretensions to universality that is in a position to challenge liberal democracy, and no universal principle of legitimacy other than the sovereignty of the people. (1992:45)

This points to two important qualifications of the thesis. First, the concession that it is the *idea*, rather than the implementation of liberal democracy which has been victorious. This equates with Fukuyama's focus on history as the evolution of ideology. Secondly, he concedes that the West is not perfect.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Fukuyama's thesis implies that the West stands at the vanguard of human

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<sup>18</sup> Anderson points out that this was something of a late development for Kojève. In his earlier writing of the 1940s, Kojève placed his confidence in the Soviet state as 'the advanced guard' of history and envisaged the end of history lying in the Socialist Empire (Anderson, 1992:321). This is why commentators such as Knutsen charge that Kojève was a Stalinist.

<sup>19</sup> There is a sense that the durability of the Western idea is central to its victory with communism in the battle for modernity. That is, whilst imperfect, liberal democracy appears as the last combatant left standing at the end of the battle.

civilisation. The West represents the furthest point of ideological development, its norms and institutions not just a product of a particular culture or region, but representative of cosmopolitan 'truths' about the nature of man.

However, Fukuyama's confidence in the West as representing the end of the history is accompanied by some unsettling qualifications. Perhaps his most surprising qualification comes when his 1992 book concludes on a note of uncertainty regarding man's future ideological evolution.<sup>20</sup> This indicates a retreat from Fukuyama's Kojévian advocacy of the liberal democratic state as the most satisfying of all systems and without fundamental contradictions. Fukuyama reiterates the argument that, in comparison to the historical alternatives, liberal democracy remains the most satisfactory form of regime, yet this does not remove the doubts raised about the durability and cohesion of the liberal democratic system. Rather it undermines his contention that the West constitutes the end of history.

There are strong teleological dimensions to this thesis. It is implied that norms and institutions will develop along an established form. Furthermore, Fukuyama states that future interaction will be influenced by the stage of development that societies have reached (1992:276).<sup>21</sup> Civilisational interaction is dominated by a sense of a civilising process. However, before considering the nature of interaction between the West and non-West, we should establish the boundaries which circumscribe Fukuyama's West.

### *The Boundaries of Fukuyama's West*

Although Fukuyama's thesis contains significant assumptions about territory, race and religion, his concept of the West is founded principally on the evolution of

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<sup>20</sup> Comparing the progress of mankind to a wagon train winding across the prairie, he concludes that the evidence concerning the direction of the wagons remain provisionally inconclusive: 'Nor can we in the final analysis know, provided the majority of wagons reach the same town, whether their occupants, having looked around a bit at their surroundings, will not find them inadequate and set their eyes on a new and more distant journey' (1992:339).

<sup>21</sup> Fukuyama suggests that interaction will be influenced by whether states and societies are still embroiled in the processes of 'history', or have developed sufficiently to have reached 'post-history'. This will be discussed further below in the context of the West and its interaction with the non-West.

certain forms of development and governance. These underpin his perception of the boundaries defining the West.

### *Territory*

Fukuyama is less concerned with a society's relationship to land or territory than Spengler, and less interested in its relationship to the environment than Toynbee. His conception of the West is grounded more on forms of governance and levels of development than on territory. However, his discussion of the West is located in, though not confined to, a territorial heartland of the United States and Western Europe. These territories form 'the original beachhead' from which liberal democracy has made significant inroads in areas of the world with differing political, religious and cultural traditions (1992:50).

Fukuyama's West is more clearly focused on the United States than are the preceding conceptions discussed; its institutions and practices appearing to present the ultimate expressions of capitalism and liberal democracy in the universal homogeneous state.<sup>22</sup> The Western European states also form an important component of Fukuyama's West, but due to their systems of governance rather than their location. For instance, the authoritarian nature of regimes operating in Spain, Portugal and Greece until the early 1970s lead Fukuyama to treat these states as marginal to the West, until incorporated into the 'mainstream' of Western democratic development (1992:13).<sup>23</sup> The states of Eastern Europe are excluded from Fukuyama's West during the Cold War due to their socialist regimes. In contrast to Wight and Bull, there is little ambiguity in Fukuyama's work about the Soviet Union's relationship to the West. Its communist system not only placed it firmly outside of the West, but constitutes the prime antithesis to the West. One senses, however, that in the post-Cold War environment, he sees opportunities for

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<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Fukuyama's discussion of the American entrepreneurial system, the US electoral system in relation to managing *thymos*, or the United States constitution as an expression of Lockean liberalism (1992:187, 315-8).

<sup>23</sup> Fukuyama also points to the difficulties which states such as France and Germany had in adapting their centralised and autocratic structures to the liberal democratic structures of the modern West. (1992:212)

peoples from the more developed former communist states to move into the normative and institutional realm of Western liberal democracy.

The territories of Asia have a more ambiguous relationship with the West. Whilst states such as China and North Korea are automatically seen as apart from the West due to their communist regimes,<sup>24</sup> the developing states of East Asia are initially treated as a part of the victorious West due to their successful adoption of economic liberalism and progress towards more democratic political structures (1989:10, 1992:14).<sup>25</sup> However, deeper consideration of cultural and political features of these societies sees Fukuyama painting East Asia as a region which differs from, and challenges, the West (1992:238-44).

Fukuyama's West also maintains an ambiguous relationship with Latin America which appears to teeter on the fringe. This is due not to its location but its failure to achieve economic development in a free capitalist economy, and to the prevalence of dictatorial regimes until the mid 1970s. Despite Fukuyama's optimism regarding political and economic reforms of the 1980s and early 1990s, this region remain on the margins of his West, still immersed in 'history'.<sup>26</sup> This again demonstrates the significance which Fukuyama attaches to governance rather than location in his geographic conception of the West.

### *Religion*

Fukuyama's discussion of religion is neither extensive nor profound. The limited focus of his historical interest means he is less interested in exploring the roots of the West in Christendom than are Wight and Bull. However, Fukuyama does link the emergence of the universal, homogenous state which characterises the West with Christianity as an ideology. He suggests Christianity was an important

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<sup>24</sup> Fukuyama views the liberalisation of the economy in China as radically altering its status from that of a leading alternative ideological system, a 'beacon to illiberal forces', to that of a straight forward authoritarian regime (1989:11; 1992:34).

<sup>25</sup> The suggestion that these regimes are becoming more democratic is scorned by some commentators, such as Sardar. For Sardar, such suggestions illustrate the limited, Western-centric nature of Fukuyama's vision of the world (1992:500).

<sup>26</sup> See Fukuyama(1992:13-4) for discussion of the political transformation of Latin America and Fukuyama(1992:41, 103-6) for discussion of the economic changes.

precursor of the ideology of universal equality subsequently articulated in the French and American Revolutions and therefore foreshadows the ideology of recognition in the Western liberal democratic state.<sup>27</sup>

Fukuyama also treats religion as a socio-economic factor when he notes that the work ethic of Protestant societies of Europe and the United States facilitated the growth of capitalism in the West.<sup>28</sup> He does not dwell on the distinctions between Protestant and Catholic societies, but implies Protestant cultures assume democratic structures more rapidly, due to their work ethic and their modernisation of society through the privatisation of religion (1992:216).<sup>29</sup>

The most significant aspect of Fukuyama's discussion of religion is his perception of religion as a pre-modern quest for satisfying forms of recognition, and consequently, as a source of conflict (1992:259, 288). As a basis for community, he argues religion can be exclusive, therefore irrational and a barrier to the achievement of 'full', meaning unqualified, recognition. Part of the ideological evolution of the West was the secularisation of society, by which Fukuyama means the removal of religion from the public and political sphere to the private, with the conclusion of the wars of religion (1989:14).<sup>30</sup> Religion, Fukuyama argues, was 'defanged' allowing the West to achieve a more rational basis of social recognition (1992:260): 'liberalism vanquished religion in Europe' (1992:271). Elsewhere, he notes that religion may provide part of the cultural context which inhibits or

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<sup>27</sup> Fukuyama uses Hegel and Kojève to argue that Christianity was a 'slave ideology' which conceptualised some form of the universal equality amongst human beings. It was a penultimate ideology given the equality it envisaged did not occur in this life but the next. The completion of the slave's quest for self-consciousness and emancipation was achieved through the secularisation of this ideology, the conceptualisation of equality in this life, achieved via the French and American Revolutions of the eighteenth century (1992:196).

<sup>28</sup> In contrast, he observes the fatalism of Hindu society's sanctioning of poverty and social immobility as a barrier to economic progress (1992:226-8).

<sup>29</sup> Fukuyama relies upon Samuel Huntington's analysis on the question of the relationship between Catholicism and democratisation of the 1970s. He notes that Catholicism was presumed to present an insuperable barrier to democratisation, particularly in Spain, Portugal and Latin America, but that ultimately, this has not been the case (1992:374, fn.8). Unlike Huntington in *The Third Wave*, Fukuyama does not explore in any depth the linkage between Catholicism and the spread of democratisation in these regions.

<sup>30</sup> Fukuyama argues the 'privatisation' of religion was achieved by Protestantism. He contrasts Christianity's position in the West to other religions which are 'totalistic' seeking to regulate both the private and the public sphere, ie. Islam and Orthodox Judaism (1992: 216).



facilitates development. This implies that societies which are dominated in the public sphere by religion are less ideologically developed in Fukuyama's eyes. This is evident in his discussion of Islamist movements which Fukuyama dismisses as a reaction, rather than a challenge, to Western values. This reaction, he argues, emanates from societies which have failed to fully assimilate or resist the influence of the West (1992:237). Therefore, for Fukuyama, it is the containment of religion as much as its practice that distinguishes the West from other societies.

### *Race*

Like religion, race is not a major element defining Fukuyama's West. Racial politics are treated as an element of political evolution; ethnicity and nationalism as earlier forms of the struggle for political recognition based on the groups quest for recognition.<sup>31</sup> As with religion, he argues race in the form of ethnicity or nationality can constitute a barrier to democratisation and to the achievement of a rational, universal society since it does not recognise universal human dignity but only the dignity for the group (1992:214, 266).<sup>32</sup> A rational society, such as liberal democracy, is based on the moral value of citizens regardless of their race.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, overcoming racial or ethnic tensions within a community is a function of its ideological evolution. He implies that the development of the liberal democratic state in the West was a product of containing ethnic or national strife.

Fukuyama treats ethnic and national identification as similar forces, but views national identification as a function of economic and political modernisation.<sup>34</sup> Nationalism is described as a transient rather than a permanent or natural source of

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<sup>31</sup> As such, like religious ideology, it has stimulated war and conflict over the centuries.

<sup>32</sup> He notes that nationalism is a specifically modern phenomenon which replaces relationships of lordship and bondage with mutual and equal recognition, but it is not fully rational since it extends recognition only to those of a certain racial or ethnic group (1992:266-8).

<sup>33</sup> However, he acknowledges that there must be some degree of homogeneity for a stable democracy to develop. In a state too deeply divided on ethnic grounds, democracy can aggravate rather than help overcome tensions (1992:119, 216).

<sup>34</sup> Nationalism is explained as a function of the elimination of old social divisions, such as kin, tribe and sect, under the pressure of labour mobility caused by modernisation of industrialising societies. He stresses the recentness and contingency of nationalism as a phenomenon

identification; as a passion that is pronounced in the early stages of modernisation, prior to popular acquisition of a national identity and political freedom:

...for national groups whose identity is more secure and of longer standing, the nation as a source of thymotic identification appears to decline. (1992:270)<sup>35</sup>

This evolution, he argues, has taken place in the West where the state bestows rights and recognition regardless of race or ethnicity. Moved by the devastation of two major wars Europe, in the form of the European Union, has moved past the peak of 'ultranationalism' represented in fascist Italy and Germany. European nationalism has been redefined, defanged and channelled out of politics and into culture (1992:270-1). In contrast, he suggests America has been unique in the degree to which peoples of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds have been assimilated into a society 'without sharply defined social classes or long-standing ethnic and national divisions' (1992:118).

Fukuyama's confidence in the degree to which racial and ethnic divisions in the West have been overcome by the liberal democratic state may carry weight in principle, but in practice is problematic given the persistence of social and economic inequalities in the heartland of the West, whether this concerns blacks in America or immigrant communities in Europe. His views seem all the more remarkable given their publication in the year major race riots shook Los Angeles. Fukuyama dismisses persistent racial divisions in the United States as a cultural problem, the legacy of pre-modern conditions such as slavery and racism, rather than the system of liberal democracy itself (1989:9; 1992:118). However, we are left with a disquieting feeling that the homogeneity and equality of the West which Fukuyama celebrates is less than authentic.

### ***Power***

Theodore Von Laue argues that the most crucial flaw of Fukuyama's arguments is his blindness to the centrality of power (1994:26). Fukuyama undoubtedly seeks to

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<sup>35</sup> Thus Fukuyama does not dismiss the continued existence of nationalism in world politics, but argues that it will characterise societies less politically developed than the West, such as the newly emancipated and developing states of the former Eastern Bloc, and the states of the Third World (1992:272-5).

demonstrate that the pursuit of power is not the only force which drives mankind.<sup>36</sup> However, his concept of the 'victory of the Western idea' is premised on the perception of a contest between the West and the socialist East in which the West proved the stronger. The power of the West is consistently measured against that of the rival socialist system. In many respects, the 'end of history' thesis is a celebration of a Western, and primarily an American, triumph in both the material and the spiritual fields. This victory is described as deriving from the viability of the West's economic and political systems which may be described as the central sources of the power of the West as conceptualised by Fukuyama.

Fukuyama argues that although Western capitalism is not the only path to modernisation, it is the most viable. The centrally planned economies of the Eastern bloc, despite achieving rapid industrialisation in the post-war period, proved too cumbersome and insufficiently innovative to compete effectively in the more complex and dynamic post-industrial age. In contrast, mechanisms such as the pricing system and freedom of thought facilitate innovation and allow capitalist economies to satisfy the material needs of societies to an extent that the communist economies markedly failed to do (1992:93). Furthermore, he argues that market economies provide not only a model for developed states, but for the world, becoming the preferred model of development for societies still undergoing 'modernisation'. In this context, he contrasts the failure of alternative models of development, such as the socialist model and the *dependencia* strategies of Latin America, with the success of the capitalist systems adopted by the late developers in East Asia (1992:98, 103).

Fukuyama discusses capitalism primarily as a model of development rather than as a form of power in itself. The Western economic model empowers the West in its capacity to satisfy the desire for material accumulation, but it also places the West at the forefront of the economic evolution of human civilisation, having outshone rival models of development. This leads Fukuyama to foresee the creation of a universal, consumer culture based on liberal principles, 'the ultimate victory of the

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<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, his discussion of realism (1992: 245-53).

VCR' in a celebration of material and consumer culture which resonates with American triumphalism (1992:108).<sup>37</sup>

A second source of Western power lies in its ability to satisfy and contain the demands of *thymos* - the desire for recognition. Liberal democracy is described by Fukuyama as a system which satisfies *isothymia* by providing equal recognition for all citizens in a universal state (1992:201-3). However, he also argues that the liberal West has succeeded in containing *megalothymia*, the desire to be recognised as superior, channelling this desire away from outlets such as religious and nationalist war and into fields such as commerce and representative politics.<sup>38</sup> Fukuyama illustrates this point by drawing examples from the American constitutional and political experience, again highlighting the American as the archetypal Western system (1992:187, 316). Once again, the strength of the West is enhanced through contrasts with the failure of communist regimes to satisfy their populations' needs for dignity and recognition (1992:xix, 166-70, 177-80).

Despite it being a discussion of the end of the Cold War, the issue of military power is only briefly considered in this thesis, with only passing references to the role of military power in the rise and victory of the West. Fukuyama also dwells

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<sup>37</sup> In fact, Fukuyama suggests that the Western consumer culture is one already widely aspired to around the globe, even if not yet fully achieved in all societies (1989:3; 1992:108). However, despite the undoubted and rapid spread of Western consumer culture in the form of products, technologies and images to many parts of the globe, enormous social and economic discrepancies remain (Held 1993a:258; Munroe, 1993:262; Peet, 1993a:73). The wealth inequalities between the developed and advanced industrial societies, or as Held describes it, the West and the Third World, are growing rather than shrinking. As Farrenkopf points out, if capitalist growth in the post-Cold War international economic order slows, the attraction of the Western capitalist model may begin to pale for many developing countries. Even within Fukuyama's terms of reference, this would seriously impede the democratisation process, since he acknowledges that economic modernisation and homogenisation are crucial to democratisation (1992:235).

<sup>38</sup> He again draws a contrast between a Lockean and a Hegelian position in this debate, identifying himself with the Hegelian which acknowledges, not only the need for self-preservation and to provide material satisfaction, but gives greater weight to the need to satisfy the need for human dignity, the need for recognition, than do Hobbes or Locke. The Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberalism is depicted by Fukuyama as seeing *thymos* as a dangerous quality which encourages conflict (1992:155-8) and which it seeks to suppress under rational desire and the urge for material accumulation. Fukuyama feels this is unrealistic since it fails to satisfy the need for recognition. His explanation of the success of the American system is in its ability to satisfy both needs, containing the dangerous overbearing elements of *thymos* and channelling them into productive areas (1992:185, 192-198, 203, 315-19).

only briefly on European imperialism.<sup>39</sup> Imperialism is not discussed as a vehicle through which the liberal democratic traditions of the West were exported to the rest of the world; rather, it is treated as another manifestation of the struggle for recognition, in this case the urge to dominate at a macro-level, and as a symptom of an earlier phase of development of the West.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on Joseph Schumpeter, Fukuyama suggests that imperialism was an atavism, a holdover from an earlier stage of human social evolution, a symptom of the incomplete sublimation of *megalothymia* into economic activity, and the product of nationalism. Through this, he seeks to explain the perpetuation of imperialism long after Europeans had discovered the principles of liberty and equality for themselves.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, Fukuyama appears confident that imperialism is an aspect of politics that loses its legitimacy with the spread of liberal democracy.<sup>42</sup> Like religion and nationalism, it is portrayed as an aspect of political development, a phase through which the West has passed. He spends little time considering the material impact of this experience on the formation of the West, failing to investigate the relationship between economic activity and imperial expansion. There is also no consideration of United States' expansion in this discussion. Fukuyama does not consider whether the spread of Western institutions and ideas which he celebrates could be considered as a form of imperialism (Peet, 1993a:72). Consequently, Fukuyama fails to

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<sup>39</sup> He notes, for instance, that modern science provided an incentive towards military modernisation (1992:73); and also that the defeat of the Soviet system in the Cold War was not marked by any significant military victory, but changes in social and economic structures which signalled the collapse of the authoritarian power structures. The communist power collapsed from a lack of legitimacy, not military defeat (1992:258).

<sup>40</sup> He diagnoses imperialism as a manifestation of the lordship-bondage relationship applied at the international level; a further manifestation of the battle for prestige. The desire of the master for recognition, rather than the nature of the states-system is seen as the cause of war, with the master in this case being the aristocratic classes. Therefore the abolition of the class distinction and consequently of the aristocracy through liberal democracy should eventually abolish imperialism (1992:245, 259).

<sup>41</sup> Therefore, he recognises it constituted a failure of the Europeans to universalise the concepts of rights realised in the French Revolution (1992:265, 267).

<sup>42</sup> He notes: 'But among each other, liberal democracies manifest little distrust or interest in mutual domination. They share with one another principles of universal equality and rights, and therefore have no grounds on which to contest each other's legitimacy ... The argument then is not so much that liberal democracy constrains man's natural instincts for aggression and violence, but that it has fundamentally transformed the instincts themselves and eliminated the motive for imperialism' (1992:263).

investigate a central aspect of the West's power, the shaping and control of international norms and institutions described by Bull as the structures of international society. This may be due to Fukuyama's perception of these norms and institutions as universal rather than an aspect of Western power. In this respect, Fukuyama's conception of the West lacks the sophistication of Bull's. For Fukuyama, the power of the West emanates from the strength and viability of its economic and political systems. It is power which expands through emulation and competition rather than subjugation; it is a largely benevolent conceptualisation of the power of the West.

### *Norms*

Although Fukuyama does not specifically investigate norms and institutions as elements of the West's power, they are central to his conception of this community. Core norms include equality, individualism, freedom and reciprocal recognition, encapsulating the ideals of the French and American Revolutions. They are perceived as closely linked to techniques for satisfying society's need for recognition and are therefore central to the perception of the moral progress achieved by the West.

The central norm of Fukuyama's Western liberal democracy is equality; a society which recognises the equality of all individuals is the end point of Fukuyama's Hegelian vision. He sees Western societies as based on the rational recognition of all citizens as equal in rights, opportunities and obligations, regardless of race, religion or any other qualification. In practice, Western societies do not always meet these ideals. Inequalities based, for instance, on race, wealth or gender persist. Fukuyama argues that these are not due to substantial contradictions within liberal democracy, but to its imperfect implementation. He seeks to sweep away arguments about existing and inherent inequalities attributing them to factors such as talent, the economically necessary division of labour, and to culture.<sup>43</sup> Once

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<sup>43</sup> He also seeks to rebut criticism from the left that capitalism is inherently a system based on the unequal distribution of power. Fukuyama suggests that it is in capitalism's interest to attack conventional social relationships based on privilege replacing these with stratifications based on skill and education (1992:290). For a discussion of capitalism as a system which sustains inequities see Rustin(1992:99), and Hurrell & Woods(1995) for a critical discussion of assumptions about globalisation and the reduction of inequalities.

again, he presents an image of a cohesive and homogeneous West, allowing his thesis to retain theoretical cohesion. However, this tends to mask existing differences and their sources.

One of Fukuyama's difficulties is in reconciling the norm of equality with the competing demands of norm of liberty. He fears recognition granted by a fully egalitarian society would involve no sense of genuine merit and therefore prove ultimately worthless. Fukuyama concurs with Nietzsche that every society needs some element of megalothymia, the drive for exceptionalness, in order to remain efficient, dynamic and creative (1992:315).<sup>44</sup> Although he seeks to resolve this tension between equality and liberty by arguing that the West, particularly American society, channels the drive for liberty and recognition into politics, economics, even sport, he still concedes that the need for struggle and challenge persists in all societies, including the West (1992:330).

Fukuyama also lends some weight to concerns of critics from the right that a truly democratic society would mean a tolerant society, but the extreme relativism of a tolerant society could lead to moral atrophy. He obviously fears the mediocrity and the onset of *ennui* which the peace and prosperity of 'post-history' could bring (1992:305-12). These tensions raise questions which Fukuyama does not fully resolve as to how final and satisfying Western society is. He argues that Western liberal democracy represents the end of history in large part because it contains no significant internal contradictions, yet cannot dispel the contradictory pull of these two core values.

This discussion draws us to Fukuyama's second key normative component of the West, that of freedom: 'The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal insofar as it recognises and protects through a system of law man's universal right to freedom'(1989:5). He describes his conception of freedom as Hegelian, seeing it not just as freedom from constraints, but freedom to make moral choice (1992:149).<sup>45</sup> Freedom distinguishes and strengthens the West in Fukuyama's

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<sup>44</sup> In expounding on the criticism of the right and considering the potential problems which extreme equality might breed, Fukuyama draws deeply on Nietzsche's work and influence.

<sup>45</sup> Once again, Fukuyama argues he is distinguishing a Hobbes-Lockean position from a Hegelian. His argument throughout is that the analysis of liberal democracy we can derive from Hobbes and

opinion, since lack of freedom constrains innovative thought and hobbles development.<sup>46</sup> Thus for him, freedom is both a moral and material good.

Fukuyama's vision of the freedom enjoyed by the individual in the West is qualified by the reality that Western societies balance the needs and desires of the individual with those of the community. As Von Laue comments, people living in the liberal democracies of the advanced industrial countries are the most subtly regimented social order in all human experience (1994:29).<sup>47</sup> This brings us to a third key normative component of Fukuyama's West, the status of the individual. As Held comments, for Fukuyama, the individual is 'sacrosanct' (1993a:272). It is the central component of his political philosophy. The individual's drive for recognition is identified as one of the central processes of history. The universal, rational state which represents the end of history is one which grants equal recognition to all individuals on the grounds of their status as human beings. The motivation of the individual underlies both capitalism and democracy (Fukuyama, 1992:xvi-xx, 42; Rustin, 1992:97).

The importance which Fukuyama attaches to the status of the individual is accentuated by his concern with the communitarian focus of Asian societies where the stronger emphasis placed on group identity could inhibit the operation of

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Locke is limited in that it elevates self-preservation and material accumulation, over the drive for recognition. Within the drive for recognition is the desire for prestige which he suggests was seen by Hobbes as the source of war. However, Fukuyama argues that it also underlies the capacity of the individual to rise above narrow self-interest to sacrifice themselves for the public good. Therefore, it also lies at the root of courage and public-spiritedness. The drive for recognition is accorded much greater importance in Hegel's philosophy, according to Fukuyama. Consequently, he argues that Hegel's conception of man's nature entails a moral dimension which the Hobbes-Lockean conception lacks, a moral dimension, viewed as the motor driving the dialectical process of history (1992:161). Some would feel that this as a rather harsh representation of the ethical dimension of Locke's work.

<sup>46</sup> Totalitarian systems, he suggests, seek to totally control the lives of their citizens, crushing civil society (1992:24).

<sup>47</sup> Knutsen suggests Fukuyama's understanding of freedom is not Hegelian. His reading of Hegel suggests that, for Hegel, 'freedom' ties the freedom of the individual with the standards of the state, implying the subjugation of the individual to the state: 'An individual is free only when he is an obedient citizen of a state with laws dictated by Reason; he is free only insofar as his private will coincides with his duty to the state. In this claim, critics of Hegel see not liberal democracy but the totalitarian state' (Knutsen, 1991:81). He argues that Fukuyama's concept of freedom is in the liberal tradition, being 'the absence of state restraint on individual actions' (Knutsen, 1991:81). However, Fukuyama does appear to see freedom as entailing more than freedom from restraint, entailing elements of mutual recognition between citizens, and between citizens and the state.



democracy.<sup>48</sup> The 'paternalistic authoritarianism' of some Asian societies is viewed as distinguishing Asia from the West at the political and normative level (1992:238-42).<sup>49</sup> However, elsewhere Fukuyama stresses the importance of community to maintaining a healthy liberal democracy. In both *The End of History* and even more emphatically in *Trust*, he acknowledges that democratic, and particularly American, society relies upon a strong communitarian tradition (1992:326, 1995b:50, 279). He demonstrates concern with an excess of extreme rights-centred individualism in contemporary American society, throwing out the balance between individualism and communitarianism (1992:292-96; 1995b:277-81, 313-18; 1995d:31). While a central plank of his thesis is that the rational recognition by the state of the individual is the most satisfying basis for society, he qualifies this by acknowledging that recognition by the state can be cold and impersonal (1992:323). In this context, community becomes an important mediating element between the individual and the state, providing a significant source of recognition in itself, and acting as a source of moral values. Fukuyama can neither rationalise nor dismiss it. He struggles with the notion that communitarianism is an important element of moral community which is under attack from the atomisation of liberal economic principles and moral relativism that accompanies the democratic principle of equality:

Liberal democracies, in other words, are not self sufficient: the community life on which they depend must ultimately come from a source different from liberalism itself.(1992:326)

Therefore, Fukuyama's West relies heavily upon the norm of individualism which distinguishes it from other societies, but which is qualified by the continuing importance of community. To survive, Western liberal democracy needs to support both individualism and community. Yet there is a tension between these two norms

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<sup>48</sup> In 'Confucianism and Democracy', he suggests that this difference in attitude to the individual stems from the idea of a transcendent morality which enables the individual to repudiate all forms of social obligation, from the family to the state. This concept, he argues, derives from Christianity, but is retained in modern liberalism in the concept of underlying human nature as a basis of right (Fukuyama, 1995d:29-30).

<sup>49</sup> In the *End of History*(1992), Fukuyama finds it useful to compare and contrast large trends in Western and Asian cultures as wholes. In *Trust*(1995b), however, Fukuyama works to dispel the monolithic image of regional cultures, pointing out parallels between societies from Asia and Europe, and differences between societies within these regions.

since community naturally constrains individualism. He does not resolve this tension which is one that prevails in American liberal thought and American society. A high priority is placed on the independence and freedom of the individual, but the impact of the decline of community is also desperately feared.

### *Institutions*

There are important institutional features bounding Fukuyama's West. The liberal state is its central institution. He sees the state driven not simply by the pursuit of power, but also by the quest for legitimacy. The states of the West achieve legitimacy through liberalism and democracy which satisfy the population's material and spiritual needs.<sup>50</sup> They extend recognition to their citizens through popular sovereignty and the rule of law, and protect the individual's right to material accumulation. Fukuyama's sense of recognition is twofold. First, the citizens of the state reciprocally recognise each other; secondly, the citizens and the state recognise each other, in the granting of rights and in the obeying of laws (1992:200, 203).<sup>51</sup>

His discussion represents the Western state as liberal in both the political and economic sense. Economic liberalism is defined as 'the recognition of the right of free economic activity and economic exchange based on private property and markets' (1992:44). In the economic sense then, liberalism and the West are equated with capitalist economics.<sup>52</sup> Political liberalism is defined as 'a rule of law

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<sup>50</sup> Legitimacy is described as a relative concept that exists in people's subjective perceptions. Therefore, the criteria is not the same for each regime. It can stem from a variety of sources, including ideology or personal loyalty; but all regimes 'capable of effective action must be based on some principle of legitimacy'. Legitimacy is crucial even to the most unjust or bloody regime. In an authoritarian regime, legitimacy may be achieved through the acknowledgment of powerful elites, through personal loyalty, or ideology. Fukuyama argues, for instance, that Nazism based its claim to legitimacy on racial ideology, demonstrated through the mechanism of struggle and war. Therefore its failure in war undermined its legitimacy (1992:15-7).

<sup>51</sup> Once again on this point, Fukuyama distinguishes the liberalism of Hobbes and Locke from that of Hegel. The liberal society envisaged by the Anglo-Saxon school, he argues, is a reciprocal and equal agreement among citizens not to interfere with each others lives and property. The Hegelian liberal society is reciprocal and equal agreement among citizens to mutually recognise each other (1992:200).

<sup>52</sup> As Van Steenberghe notes, Fukuyama's concept of rights encompasses only civil and political rights. He chooses to omit economic and social rights, in that these are not 'clearly compatible' with other rights like those of property and free economic exchange (Fukuyama, 1992:43, Van Steenberghe, 1992:713). Drawing on the work of James Bryce, Fukuyama includes civil rights,

that recognises certain individual rights or freedoms from government control' (1992:42). Economic and political liberalism are treated as linked, but not in the sense of democracy emerging as a function of rational accumulation. Rather, he sees modernisation leading to capitalism, demanding a better educated population and heightening political consciousness (1992:116). This produces dissatisfaction with traditional political structures and demands for participation in the political process: 'The desire for recognition, then, is the missing link between liberal economics and liberal politics' (1992:206). Therefore, the evolution of democracy is an aspect of man's ideological evolution. He defines democracy as 'the right held universally by all citizens to have a share of political power, that is the right of all citizens to vote and participate in politics' (1989:5; 1992:43). The liberal state is 'democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed'.<sup>53</sup>

The institutions which exemplify his West are American political institutions. The United States' constitution and Declaration of Independence supports both the 'pursuit of happiness' in terms of acquisition of property, and the exercise of popular sovereignty and free expression of political views (1992:159, 186). For him, the United States and England represent the strongest and longest established contemporary democracies. This observation reminds us of the limited historical scope of the thesis, given that modern democracies are a fairly recent historical phenomenon evolving only in the late eighteenth century.

### ***Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

Fukuyama's perception of the cultural world order is distinguished for the preceding authors discussed by the strength of its underlying concept of a linear civilising process. Human society is perceived as on a journey of ideological revelation, a form of civilising process with the West as the vanguard, and which

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rights of exemption of control of the citizen in respect of person and property; religious rights of freedom of worship; and political rights, freedom from control in matters that do not effect the welfare of the community, including of the press (1992:42).

<sup>53</sup> A number of critics, particularly from the left, are unhappy about Fukuyama's representation of capitalism and democracy as intrinsically linked, suggesting there are alternative constitutions of democracy, such as social democracy, which remain viable in the post-Cold War world. Such arguments challenge the surety and homogeneity of Fukuyama's ideological model of the West as the only viable institutional model of the post-Cold War order.

culminates in the system of liberal democracy. The West is the norm, presenting the standard which other societies must reach. The anticipated universalisation of Western liberal democracy dominates Fukuyama's understanding of the West's interaction with the non-West.

This concept of civilisational interaction is dominated by the processes of progress and modernisation. Fukuyama identifies technological and industrial development as leading to social, economic and political homogenisation. In anticipating that modernisation induces homogenisation, Fukuyama makes more explicit the implicit links between his ideas and those of development theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Almond. He notes the 'remarkable universality of modernisation', observing that the aspiration to economic modernisation is 'one of the most universal characteristics of human society one can imagine' (Fukuyama, 1994:245).<sup>54</sup> Although his concept of liberalisation is complicated by the importance which he attaches to the desire for recognition, he clearly links the quest for recognition with economic evolution. Moreover, like the early modernisation theorists, Fukuyama assumes that the result of modernisation will be development along the lines of the Western liberal democratic model. However, he does not take the course of modernisation as predetermined in that he interprets the history of the twentieth century as dominated by ideological battles for control of the direction of modernity. His discussion of civilisational interaction prior to 1989 focuses on this battle in the context of the Cold War.

The key challenges to the West prior to 1989 which Fukuyama discusses are rival ideologies which sought to present themselves as higher forms of civilisation (1992:35). Fascism and communism are described as ideologies that also arose from the modernisation process, offering alternative social systems, structures and institutions for development. Both are presented as diseases of social development rather than ideologies representing particular qualities of Western society, despite their both originating within the West. Fascism is rapidly dismissed as a 'radical and deformed outgrowth of nineteenth century imperialism'; an alternative

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<sup>54</sup> Fukuyama in fact suggests that that scholars were perhaps too hasty in casting off modernisation theory (1994:246).

exploratory route to modernisation, but one that proved a dead end (1989:16).<sup>55</sup> The relationship between the West and the communist East plays a much more significant role in Fukuyama's discussion, but Marxism-Leninism is similarly treated as an alternative 'route' to the end of history which proved ultimately unsatisfactory (1992:133).<sup>56</sup> The communist Soviet Union and Eastern Europe constitute the chief antitheses and rival to Fukuyama's West. He constantly draws the boundaries of the West in contrast to those of the communist world in comparisons which rarely favour Marxism-Leninism. Communism's demise is depicted as stemming from both material and spiritual sources, ultimately producing a crisis of legitimacy in various communist regimes.<sup>57</sup> Fukuyama's discussion of the inflexibility of the Soviet system and economy, leading to its inability to compete with the dynamic and more efficient West, again reminds us of his antecedents from the political science community of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>58</sup> However, Fukuyama suggests not so much the convergence but submergence of the Soviet system into the West, due in no small part to the incentives and attractions of the West's consumer culture.

China provides a further defeated rival to the West; again, it is presented as an ideological rather than a cultural rival. He suggests that China has also been seduced by, and submerged into, the consumer culture with the inevitable long-term political consequences of gradual homogenisation. Fukuyama argues that

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<sup>55</sup> He is keen to dismiss this ideology as a terrible mutation, 'a pathological and extreme condition, by which one cannot judge modernity as a whole'. Hence, it is 'a by product of the modernisation process, but not a necessary component of modernity' (1992:129).

<sup>56</sup> The significance of this is that other challenges which might seem to manifest new authoritarian challenges can be dismissed by Fukuyama's thesis as already tried and doomed to failure.

<sup>57</sup> Economic failure is described as 'catalysing rejection of the belief system and exposing the weakness of the underlying structure' (1992:29). He highlights a crisis of confidence in the Soviet elites of the 1980s (1992:30-1). The Soviet system, he argues, also failed to provide the dignity and recognition needed. In this sense, 'indignation' is attributed as a major source of discontent, facilitating small acts of defiance that accumulated into a revolution leading to a broader rejection of that system (1992:177-80).

<sup>58</sup> The various 'convergence theories' proposed at this time suggested that the Western and Soviet systems would eventually evolve similar economic and political systems. For some, this involved the West moving towards more socialist forms of organisation. But there also existed a strong opinion that economic modernisation would demand the Soviet bloc to move toward more pluralist institutions, reducing the role of ideology and the Communist party (Meyer, 1970:320).

under Deng Xiao Ping, a revolution of real governance occurred. Those familiar with China know that:

Marxism and ideological principle have become virtually irrelevant as guides to policy, and that bourgeois consumerism has a real meaning in that country for the first time since the revolution. (1989:11)

Thus, Fukuyama reads the death notice for Marxism-Leninism as a living, appealing ideology:

Communism, which had once portrayed itself as a higher and more advanced form of civilisation than liberal democracy, would henceforth be associated with a high degree of political and economic backwardness. While communist power persists in the world, it has ceased to reflect a dynamic and appealing idea. (1992:35)

Given that communism forms the quintessential 'other' in Fukuyama's conceptualisation of the West, it is particularly interesting to note the close relationship between Fukuyama's political ideas and Marxism. As Conor Cruise O'Brien points out, both ideologies arose from the Enlightenment, sharing a secular emphasis and a common commitment to science and reason.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, there are strong links between the ideals of Fukuyama and Karl Marx. Both draw heavily on Hegel to develop a philosophy which is linear, progressive, premised on stages of development strongly focused on material culture and the conquest and control of nature, and both posit the 'end of history'. Huntington goes so far as to argue that Fukuyama's thesis suggests not the disappearance of Marxism, but its pervasiveness (Huntington, 1989:9). Similarly, Meštrovic discusses Fukuyama's thesis as a 'not so subtle revival of Marxism' for non-Marxist purposes (Meštrovic, 1994:16).<sup>60</sup> However, Fukuyama and Marx differ in their reading of Hegel on the

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<sup>59</sup> O'Brien(1995) argues that liberalism and Marxism represent two essential strands of the Enlightenment; one moderate and reformist, the other revolutionary. He traces the evolution of the more 'pragmatic and limited' strand of Enlightenment thought which developed in England into liberalism, and a more radical tradition of thought which evolved in France and provided the foundations for first the French Revolution and then Marxism. O'Brien describes this strand as 'anti-Christian, utopian, arbitrary and unlimited'. The reformist strand evolved into Anglophone liberalism, the more radical was articulated in the French, and subsequently Russian and Chinese revolutions.

<sup>60</sup> Meštrovic discusses Hegel, Marx and Fukuyama as scholars firmly embedded in the Enlightenment traditions, with faith in 'the victory of grand, modernist, social engineering over

stability of liberal society. For Marx, a fundamental contradiction remained in liberal society between capital and labour, implying that it did not constitute the 'end of history', but the victory of the bourgeoisie. Fukuyama draws his reading of Hegel from Kojève for whom communism did not represent a higher stage than liberal democracy: '[I]t was part of the same stage of history that would eventually universalise the spread of liberty and equality to all parts of the world' (1992:66).<sup>61</sup> For Fukuyama, the class issue has been resolved in the West in 'the egalitarianism of modern America' (1989:9). Fukuyama rejects suggestions that he is rejuvenating a Marxist project, arguing that his book was written as an attack on the economic reductionism of Marxism, 'to recover the richness of human motivation embodied in the concept of the struggle for recognition' (1994:255).<sup>62</sup> He emphasises that his analysis looks, not only at material sources of human satisfaction, but also at thymotic needs. Ultimately, Fukuyama draws the boundaries between himself and Marxism by portraying the impact of Marxism on societies as repressive.<sup>63</sup> Fukuyama is keen, if not anxious, to distance himself from the Marxist perspective. Yet, in some ways, this highlights the degree to which the ideas of these scholars parallel one another, accenting the commonalities as much as the differences between Marxist and liberal systems of thought. This illustrates that Marxism is not alien to, but actually closely integrated with, intellectual traditions of the West.

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tradition and culture'. He contrasts their faith in modernity to De Tocqueville's belief in tradition and culture as the source from which democracy emerges. This is interesting given Fukuyama's use of De Tocqueville as a source for his own ideas on the role of community in American democracy and society (Meštrovic, 1994:14-6).

<sup>61</sup> In 1989 Fukuyama wrote: 'We are still living with the consequences of Marx's attempt to confront Hegel: ... The total and manifest failure of communism forces us to ask whether Marx's entire experiment was not a 150-year detour and whether we need to reconsider whether Hegel was not in fact right in seeing the end of history in the liberal democratic states of the French and American Revolutions (1989/90:22). Fukuyama's attachment to Kojève's reading of Hegel as opposed to Marx's seems somewhat ironic given Kojève's earlier support of communist society as promising the end of history.

<sup>62</sup> See also Fukuyama (1989:7) where he ascribes the failure to understand many key historical changes, such as the reform movements in China and the Soviet Union, to the mistake of attributing material cause to phenomena that are essentially ideal in nature. As suggested above, economic reductionism is a charge he also levels at Anglo-Saxon liberalism in arguing that it seeks to subordinate the drive for recognition under rational desire (1992:158, 185; 1994:252).

<sup>63</sup> For instance, he identifies the 'sinister' use of Marxist's concept of history to support regimes he describes as authoritarian and coercive, such as in the Soviet Union and China (1992:69).

Fukuyama's East is, in a sense, a closely integrated part of the West. It is, in some ways, a mirror of the Western soul.

Fukuyama's perception of civilisational interaction leads him to see the victory of the 'Western idea' of liberal democracy as a defining moment in the progress of human civilisation. He celebrates the victory of 'the West' in 'the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism' (1989:3).<sup>64</sup> In focusing on history as ideological evolution, he demonstrates most clearly the influence of Hegelian thinking on his own conceptualisation of civilisational interaction. However, despite his interest in the processes of history, Fukuyama's analysis does not provide an in-depth historical perspective. There is little detailed consideration of the forms of non-Western societies which preceded modernisation, nor of the actual process by which the system of Western values displaces other 'civilisations', outside of the 'battle for modernity', or the Cold War rivalry.

Ultimately, the end of the Cold War did not bring universal peace and stability. The triumphalism of 1989 was muted by the stormy international politics of the 1990s. Fukuyama, however, remains confident that the liberal democratic West now provides the uncontested model of development for human civilisation. He continues to argue that the institutions and ideas of the liberal West, whilst not yet universally achieved, could not be improved upon (Fukuyama, 1992:46; 1994:241; Rothwell, 1995). This places the onus on other societies to respond to the West and pursue its model of development, implying that interaction between the West and non-West will continue on a different plane and be even more markedly determined by levels of development.

With the end of the Cold War, Fukuyama views interaction as influenced no longer by ideological rivalry, but by a societies' relationship to 'history' and 'post-history'. Echoing earlier international legal theorists, and in keeping with the analysis of contemporary commentators such as Singer & Wildavsky(1993), Fukuyama's concept of the post-Cold War world is characterised by an image of the world

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<sup>64</sup> 'As mankind approaches the end of the millennium, the twin crises of authoritarianism and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: linear democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty' (1992:42).



divided into two zones:<sup>65</sup> 'post-history' comprises established liberal democracies which, Fukuyama argues, form an innately peaceable community of states which have reached the end of history and are now more preoccupied with economics rather than politics and ideology. While the nation-state would continue as a political entity, economic rationalism will reduce tensions and increase interdependence. Fukuyama's prime example of this community is the European Union. Here, the 'death of ideology' means

...the growing 'Common Marketization' of international relations, and the diminution of the likelihood of large-scale conflict between states. (Fukuyama, 1989:18)<sup>66</sup>

In contrast, the 'historical' world remains dominated by power politics and riven with a variety of religious, national and ideological conflicts.<sup>67</sup> Fukuyama's 'post-history' is normatively and institutionally synonymous with the West, implying that the zone of history and power politics chiefly comprises the non-West. Whilst power politics would still influence interaction between the two zones,<sup>68</sup> he suggests that the zone of peace will expand globally as more societies evolve to reach 'the end of history', promising a more peaceful and prosperous world (1992:279-80).<sup>69</sup> Therefore Fukuyama's perception of interaction entails assumptions drawn from democratic peace theory, that democracies do not fight each other and that the spread of democracy consequently promises a more

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<sup>65</sup> Earlier international legal theorists had envisaged the world as divided between those within the civilised normative and legal community of international society and those less civilised societies lying outside this community. See chapter Five for further discussion. See also Gong(1984). Singer and Wildavsky, like Fukuyama, suggest that the post-Cold War world will be divided into two zones, one liberal, prosperous and peaceful, the other characterised by conflict and instability. See also Goldgeier & McFaul(1992) and Hurrell & Woods(1995).

<sup>66</sup> Fukuyama elaborates that the establishment of a more peaceful society in the West has been established by the sublimation of *thymos*, the source of war (1992:255). It is also due to the spread of compassion and tolerance which accompanies the spread of democracies (1992:261).

<sup>67</sup> In the 'historical' world, the nation-state will continue to be the chief locus of political identification (Fukuyama, 1992:276-7).

<sup>68</sup> Fukuyama identifies three likely axes of interaction and conflict; oil; immigration and 'world order questions' such as regulation of technological proliferation and environmental interests (1992:277-8).

<sup>69</sup> This, then, is an added incentive to speed up the establishment of liberal democracies, in other words to enhance the Westernisation process.

peaceful world.<sup>70</sup> His theory demonstrates substantial faith in the continued stability of liberal democracies, and their capacity to spread effectively and universally. His argument dismisses the significance of conflicts which continue in the heartland of the 'post-history' West, such as tensions in Ireland or Spain, by proposing that large-scale conflicts between states disappear in the liberal, democratic zone of peace. However, these instances of conflict suggest that even in the West, 'history' has been incompletely played out.<sup>71</sup>

Fukuyama shows tremendous commitment to the capacity of the Western idea to expand globally. In contrast to Bull, he anticipates and expects rather than explores in detail the mechanism of this expansion. For Farrenkopf, Fukuyama's faith in the spread of liberalism and capitalism are one aspect of his political idealism (1995:74). For Sardar, they demonstrate a narrow perspective which assumes the primacy of Western models and ideas, even in the non-West.<sup>72</sup> Sardar places Fukuyama in a tradition of writers 'who have laboured to appropriate non-Western histories and place Western civilisation at the apex of human achievement (Sardar, 1992:498). Fukuyama's historical perspective is undoubtedly Western-focused. As noted above, the 'end of history' gives little consideration to the details and conditions of non-Western societies other than communist societies. This leads to Fukuyama's much commented upon remark that for his purposes,

...it matters very little what strange thoughts occur to people in Albania or Burkino Faso, for we are interested in what one could in some sense call the common ideological heritage of mankind. (1989:9)

He clearly sees the direction of the flow of major ideologies as moving from the First to the Third World, from the West to the 'Rest' (1989/90:24).

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<sup>70</sup> Fukuyama's assumptions about democratic peace also demonstrate a belief in the interaction of capitalism and democracy as the foundation of democracy which can also be found in the work of authors such as Joseph Schumpeter, as discussed by Michael Doyle (Doyle, 1986).

<sup>71</sup> Fukuyama's democratic peace theory also depends heavily on his assessment of the sources of conflict. For instance, Held notes his neglect of systemic sources of conflict and schism (1993b:295).

<sup>72</sup> Sardar argues Fukuyama gives non-Western cultures three choices: they can disappear, be subdued by military technology or embrace consumerism ! (1992:499).

Fukuyama's discussion of interaction is at a theoretical level acultural, as is his discussion of interaction at the ideological level. Political movements driven by religious, ethnic or nationalist sentiments of ideologies are therefore not viewed by Fukuyama as major challenges to the civilising process, but temporary features of societies still evolving through 'history'. The existence of such movements does not determine, but does condition interaction between the West and non-West. For instance, he does not see Islamic fundamentalism as a major challenge to the West, since it does not have a universalist appeal (1989/90:26). This discussion gives little consideration to the impact of Islam on societies in which it is a powerful and spreading force.<sup>73</sup> Nationalism is treated as a more serious threat to stability, but not to the long-term and overall appeal and spread of liberal ideas. For instance, nationalism in the societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is

...a necessary concomitant to spreading democratisation, as national and ethnic groups long denied a voice express themselves in favour of sovereignty and independent existence. (1992:272)

Nationalism is therefore treated as a political movement found in countries still developing their political identities, mirroring an evolutionary phase through which the West has already proceeded (1992:269-75). In this sense, nationalist movements do not present new challenges to the West, or represent alternative systems, but reconstitute challenges already met.

However, Fukuyama's position regarding the impact of cultural diversity on the progress of the Western idea exhibits important tensions. Having dismissed Islam and nationalism, the most significant challenge to the universalisation of the West which he identifies is the paternalistic authoritarian regimes of East Asia. Although these regimes are capitalist and nominally democratic, Fukuyama is concerned that the strong group identification which these societies derive from their culture represses individualism and may seriously undermine the institutions of liberal democracy as understood in the West (1992:238). Furthermore, the economic success experienced by these societies in the early and mid 1990s could prompt rejection of the Western model. Although he argues that the process of systemic

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<sup>73</sup> One might consider, for instance, its growing impact on the social and political life of Africa, Southeast Asia and, perhaps, on urban populations in the United States and Europe.

evolution has ended with liberal democracy and market-based capitalism, signalling the persistence of cultural, but not institutional differences (1995c:103), he elsewhere suggests that the success of development in East Asia and the perceived decline in American living standards reduces the likelihood that Asian societies would converge upon the American model of liberal democracy (1995d:30-1). This appears to suggest alternative models for development, ones in which there is a different balance between individualism and communitarianism (1995d:33). What are the consequences of this challenge for the homogenisation of the Western idea which Fukuyama anticipates follows economic modernisation? A rejection could have serious implications for his thesis. It could be viewed as a short term set back to the universalisation of the West, or could present a more fundamental challenge by providing an alternative model of development, implying the Western idea was not universal (McCarney, 1993:47). The tension in Fukuyama's position is exacerbated by the fact that, although he establishes the ideal of universal and homogenous recognition as the highest form of governance, he recognises that it is not totally satisfying for the individual citizen. While Fukuyama argues that the paternalistic authoritarian societies of Asia cannot offer a universal model of governance, he acknowledges that important elements of group identification for which he criticises these societies, the appeal of community, can be found even in Western society.

The ambiguities in Fukuyama's position on culture are compounded by the fact that, although he argues that modernisation encourages homogenisation regardless of the pre-existing culture, he also concedes that pre-existing cultures can facilitate or inhibit the establishment of capitalism and democracy.<sup>74</sup> Fukuyama sees the liberal democratic state as an institution which is central, but not unique to the West.<sup>75</sup> On the contrary, he argues that a liberal revolution is occurring worldwide, implying the democratic state is a universal institutional model (1992:50).

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<sup>74</sup> Recall, for instance, Fukuyama's discussion of the importance of the work ethic in establishing capitalism in Europe and Asia (1992:227).

<sup>75</sup> It is interesting to note that here he is critical of Weber's account of modern democracy<sup>as</sup> arising out of the specific conditions of the Occidental city: 'The fact that democracy took off because it was the most rational possible political system and 'fit' a broader human personality shared across cultures is not seriously considered' (Fukuyama, 1992:220).

Fukuyama seeks to demonstrate that barriers to democracy, such as religion, ethnic consciousness or unequal social structures, characterise societies at a certain level of development rather than<sup>as</sup> permanently antithetical to the system (1992:215-8). Democracy is presented as part of the common evolutionary direction of humanity, regardless of culture.<sup>76</sup> However, this assertion is qualified by Fukuyama's attention to cultural conditions that facilitate or inhibit the development of stable democracy. In this context, he cites examples from Europe where in spite of the pre-existing culture, democracy experienced difficulties in becoming established; and examples outside of the traditional Western heartland, such as India, where democracy became established in spite of a pre-existing culture which did not favour democracy (1992:221). On the one hand, Fukuyama argues that the liberal democratic state over-rides and homogenises pre-existing forms of community. Yet on the other, he suggests that pre-modern forms of association can facilitate the establishment of liberal democratic structures, and are even vital to protecting these institutions.<sup>77</sup>

Successful political modernisation thus requires the preservation of something pre-modern within its framework of rights and constitutional arrangements, the survival of peoples and the incomplete victory of states. (1992:222)

These qualifications suggest Fukuyama concedes that culture is a significant element in the spread of democracy, and imply the development of liberal democracy is most likely in societies similar to the European-based cultures from which it emerged. These questions suggest a tension between Fukuyama's teleological view of development in which other cultures are submerged into the West by the 'civilising process', and his recognition of the importance of existing cultures in facilitating the 'civilising process'.

Furthermore, he acknowledges resistance to homogenisation at the level of cultural identities:

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<sup>76</sup> See, for instance, 'Confucianism and Democracy' where, in noting that Confucianism does not present a major barrier to democracy, Fukuyama again argues that democracy is linked with the processes of modernisation (Fukuyama, 1995d).

<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, he argues that a successful liberal democracy must establish an irrational pride in its democratic culture to bind the community to this culture (1992:215).

While the forms of acceptable economic and political organisation have been growing steadily fewer in number over the past hundred years, the possible interpretations of the surviving forms, capitalism and liberal democracy, continue to be varied. This suggests that even as ideological differences between states fade into the background, important differences between states will remain, shifted however to the plane of culture and economics. (1992:244)

In his subsequent work *Trust* (1995b), Fukuyama further acknowledges the salience of culture in the modern world. However, he distinguishes himself from Huntington, arguing that cultural difference does not necessarily lead to conflict (1995b:6). Fukuyama explores the relationship between culture and economics, suggesting culture influences the character and industrial structure of societies. The key cultural characteristic that he identifies is the level of social capital, or trust, which exists in a society. The degree to which the society is based upon open and mutual trust influences the nature and structure of economic development. However, this analysis is based on a discussion of national rather than broad civilisational cultures. In fact, Fukuyama attempts to eradicate such simplified notions as a single Asian culture. Whilst Asian societies share common cultural characteristics, he argues there is no single Asian model of development or unified challenge to the West (Fukuyama, 1995c:97).<sup>78</sup> However, he continues to assume that the institutional models of Western liberal democracy define the parameters within which all societies will evolve.<sup>79</sup> In *Trust*, Fukuyama addresses cultural differentiation, but maintains that it will not inhibit institutional and, presumably, ideological convergence towards a liberal political and economic system. Consequently, the impression remains of a single civilising process with 'the West' at its forefront.

In part, Fukuyama's problems arise from seeking to represent the Western idea as a universal and homogenising process. Yet his analysis gives rise to uncertainty as to whether Asian societies present a reinterpretation or a substantial deviation from

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<sup>78</sup> He argues Japan has more in common with Germany and the United States as communitarian, 'high-trust' societies in comparison to the family orientated 'low-trust' societies such as China, Italy and France.

<sup>79</sup> Institution building, he argues, has reached a 'dead-end' with the establishment of liberal democratic political institutions and capitalist economic structures throughout the developed world (1995c:102).

the Western model. This raises the question of whether Fukuyama can sustain his concept of a single civilising process, or if there is space for a plurality of civilisational projects, a theory which might acknowledge a greater role for culture and diversity.

## ***Conclusion***

Despite these problems, Fukuyama's thesis is important since he articulates an important and powerful conception of the West and its role in the post-Cold War world - a voice of liberal idealism, to some, a voice of Western neo-imperialism to others. His conception is shaped by his focus on the United States, which serves as his paramount model of the West. His thesis is premised on a conception of cultural world order in which humanity is perceived as a community journeying through a process of ideological evolution. The West appears not as one among many civilisations, but as an ideology at the forefront of a civilising process. He clearly perceives interaction in the post-Cold War world to be shaped by the levels of ideological evolution and development of different societies.

Fukuyama's predominantly optimistic concept of the West stands in stark contrast to the bleak, declinist image which Spengler invokes in his reading of late modernity. They stand as polar opposites with respect to Fukuyama's belief in human progress, his faith in science, his focus on the United States as the heartland of the West in contrast to Spengler's focus on Germany, and in Fukuyama's positive assessment of the norms and institutions of the liberal democratic state. Whereas Fukuyama sees these as the culmination of man's ideological evolution, Spengler regards them as marking the West's gradual decline. Fukuyama's optimism about the spread of liberal democracy also stands in contrast to Toynbee's scepticism about the successful transfer of norms and institutions across cultures.

At one level, Toynbee and the international society scholars, like Fukuyama, regard the West as a universalised entity. However, in viewing the West as the theoretical model towards which other societies are evolving, Fukuyama's West provides more than a technical or normative framework for modern civilisational interaction. Furthermore, unlike Bull, Fukuyama does not ground his analysis on

the global normative and institutional power of the West, but on its ideological ascendancy in the battle for modernity. Its appeal is deemed to be universal, irrespective of culture, given that culture is ultimately subsumed by modernity.

However, problems within this thesis undermine confidence in Fukuyama's conception of civilisation as a singular process. His concept of the West is an idealised one. It is largely portrayed as homogenous and united with little consideration given to the serious differences and inequalities that exist. Ultimately, Fukuyama seems uncertain whether liberal democracy can sustain itself, given inner tensions relating to core elements of the Western ideology, such as the relationship between the individual and community, and the balance between liberty and equality.<sup>80</sup> This casts doubt on Fukuyama's assertion that Western liberal democratic society is one which contains no major contradictions. Finally, the thesis implies the relevance of Western models to other societies with insufficient exploration of the complexities of non-Western societies. Fukuyama's discussion of Asian development, however, suggests that other models of development may be emerging. The extent to which these merely adapt or undermine the Western model is uncertain. This raises important questions as to whether civilisational interaction leads to greater convergence or differentiation in the cultural world order. The overall thrust of Fukuyama's thesis is to suggest convergence along the Western model. This is an argument which is strongly disputed by the next author to be considered, Samuel Huntington.

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<sup>80</sup> These concerns are also expressed in voices of contemporary American liberals reflecting on challenges to their society today. Consider, for instance, recent debates over issues such as welfare and gun ownership.



## *Chapter Seven*

### *Civilisations in Conflict: Samuel Huntington's Conception of the West*

Published in the American journal, *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, Samuel Huntington's 'The Clash of Civilisations?' had a resounding impact on intellectual and political communities worldwide. It was described by some commentators as the 'X' article of the 1990s, with reference to George Kennan's path breaking *Foreign Affairs* article of 1947 (Kennan, 1947). The essay projected issues of civilisation and identity to the fore of the study of contemporary world politics, arguing that cultural identities are becoming the organising principle of international relations:

Spurred by modernisation, global politics is being reconfigured along cultural lines ....Cultural communities are replacing Cold War blocs, and the fault lines between civilisations are becoming the central lines of conflict in politics. (1996a:125)

In the light of this reconfiguration, Huntington advises the West to abandon its universalist pretensions, and recognise the realities and threats of a multicultural world, threats which include a hostile Islamic and resurgent Asian civilisations. It should consolidate its own power and solidarity and refrain from undue interference in other civilisations.

Huntington's article has been influential, in part because it provides a radical and controversial reading of post-Cold War world politics. It has stimulated a range of responses debating the role of civilisations, and of the West in particular, in world politics. The article's impact was enhanced by the influence and respect which its author commands, particularly in the United States. This chapter will focus on the publications in which he discusses the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, primarily his 1993 essay and his subsequent book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996a) and the debate which it generated. The debate itself helps

to elucidate key factors in the conceptions of the West and world order which Huntington represents.<sup>1</sup> The discussion will also refer to Huntington's related publications on topics such as modernisation and democratisation.

Within Huntington's somewhat pessimistic reading of the future of world politics lies a conception of the West which rejects Fukuyama's assumptions of universality and harkens back to the visions of Toynbee, and even Spengler, of the West as a powerful community under threat of decline. Although his analysis lacks the complexity of Toynbee's perception of civilisational interaction, Huntington seems to share his sense that the West has an opportunity to regroup and redeem its power, though not necessarily its dominance of world politics.

### *Huntington's Era and Influences*

Throughout his career, Samuel P. Huntington (1927-) has been a provocative commentator working at the heart of the American East Coast academic and policy community. Born in New York city, he studied Political Science at the universities of Yale (B.A. 1946), Chicago (M.A. 1948) and then Harvard (Ph.D. 1951) where he has spent the greater part of his academic career.<sup>2</sup> In addition to teaching and research, Huntington has acted as an adviser to government, serving as coordinator of security planning of the National Security Council from 1977 to 1978. His ideas on strategic and military affairs are highly regarded in the policy community.<sup>3</sup> At

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<sup>1</sup> There are some changes between the original article and the book. As David Welch(1997) notes, the '?' disappears from the title of the book, the thesis becoming less speculative. In some respects, the book provides a more nuanced and detailed discussion, as Huntington responds to three years of commentary and criticism. However, the thesis itself is not moderated. If anything, it becomes more critical of the West's current position and more definite in its prescriptions and predictions (Hassner, 1996/7).

<sup>2</sup> Huntington also held appointments at the Brookings Institute, Washington D.C. (1952-3), Columbia University, New York (1958-63) and was a visiting fellow at All Souls College, Oxford University England in 1973. He has held several research affiliations, joining the influential Social Science Research Council (Committee on Comparative Politics) in 1967. He is a Fellow of the American Academy, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations and of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, to name but a few affiliations. Huntington's writings span American politics, civil-military relations, political development and democratisation

<sup>3</sup> Huntington was a fairly contentious figure in this field. During the Vietnam War, he was one of the proponents of counterinsurgency principles, his ideas were viewed as influential in policies such as aerial bombardment and the strategic hamlets programme. His work and opinions were highly regarded in security circles, but disliked by liberals. See O'Brien(1972), Putnam(1986).

the time of publishing 'The Clash of Civilisations?', he was Eaton Professor of the Science of Government and Director of the influential, conservative Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University. A less well known author may not have received as much attention or evoked so much reaction.

Huntington commenced his career in political science during the high point of modernisation and development theory in the 1950s. His work both demonstrates the impact of these ideas and develops a critical perspective on them. The late 1960s were a time of upheaval for the United States with the escalation of the war in Vietnam and of civil disorder at home diminishing the optimism which had characterised the 1950s. In the political science community, the instability of many post-colonial societies undermined optimism concerning the processes of modernisation and development. Huntington became critical of assumptions that modernisation was inevitably a positive force that led to development in the manner of Western society (Huntington, 1971), noting that the spread of modern Western forces often led to instability, even 'decay' in developing countries.<sup>4</sup> These concerns are reflected in Huntington's work of the late 1960s which focused on the conditions for the establishment of order, stability and institutions for governance, and where he declared that it was not the form, but the degree of government that distinguished countries (Huntington, 1968:1). Huntington's interest in order and change resonate throughout the 'clash of civilisations' thesis.

Another feature of the 'clash' thesis is Huntington's cautious pessimism. In the late 1980s, he trod the intellectual middle ground between the declinism of authors such as Paul Kennedy(1988) and the triumphalism with which Francis Fukuyama greeted the end of the Cold War (Huntington, 1988; Fukuyama, 1989). Intimating views later developed in the 'clash' thesis, Huntington warned of complacency which the end of the Cold War could induce; of the end of a certain form of

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<sup>4</sup> This occurred particularly when rates of mass participation exceeded the establishment of solid institutions for governance (Huntington, 1965). Putnam suggests that since quite early in his career, Huntington demonstrated a deep concern with not just the creation, but the successful defence of existing liberal institutions. These concerns developed in the context of the Cold War, but continued to be demonstrated in his observations of post-colonial societies, and of the upheaval in American society in the 1960s and 1970s (Putnam, 1986).

stability which the Cold War had enforced; and of the emergence of new forms of conflict (Huntington, 1989).<sup>5</sup>

The politics of the early 1990s appeared to vindicate Huntington's pessimism, with a range of regional conflicts which form an important context for his thesis. Russia suffered political instability with the demise of Gorbachev and the rise of Yeltsin, and pro-democratic, pro-nationalist and pro-communist forces battling for influence and support. Conflicts erupted in the former Soviet republics of Moldova, Tadjikistan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The collapse of Yugoslavia escalated into an increasingly cruel war in Bosnia from which the chilling term 'ethnic cleansing' emerged to rekindle memories of the worst forms of ethnic and racial intolerance. In India, the Ayodhya mosque was destroyed in December 1992. Western involvement in the Gulf soured with the United States' bombing of Baghdad; and at the 1993 Vienna Human Rights Conference, differences between Western and non-Western governments became more evident. Racial and ethnic identity were increasingly perceived as issues of significance, with many of these disputes involving different ethnic communities. Racial tensions and violence became more prominent in Europe, particularly in Germany and France, and in the United States, which had been rocked by the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Meanwhile, experiences in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations in Somalia and Bosnia in the early 1990s shook confidence in assertive multilateralism and the United States' willingness and capacity to lead at 'the uni-polar moment'. Charles Maynes(1995) identifies a shift in attitude in some sectors of United States society away from the triumphal sense of America standing at the forefront of a 'new world order' towards a 'new pessimism'. Locating it alongside works by Robert Kaplan(1994), Matthew Connolly & Paul Kennedy(1994), and John Mearsheimer, Maynes describes Huntington's 1993 article as one of the foremost expressions of

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<sup>5</sup> In 1989, Huntington like Fukuyama was engaged in a study of the spread of democracies from the mid-1970s and culminating in 1989. Huntington's analysis was presented in *The Third Wave*(1991b). Like Fukuyama, he fundamentally welcomed the spread of democracies. However, his analysis suggested that this was not an unrelenting wave but part of a series of waves. Each wave was followed by a reverse wave (1991b:13). Fukuyama's pattern of democratisation does not contain such a clear concept of reversal. This again demonstrates Huntington's caution and perhaps pessimism.

this sense of uncertainty and foreboding. Some International Relations scholars drew attention to the changing nature of security, identifying new sources of tension and instability in regional politics such as migration, resource depletion and weapons proliferation.<sup>6</sup> John Mearsheimer(1990), for instance, warned of the instability which nuclear proliferation could produce in a multi-polar world. Basic to Mearsheimer's argument is the sense that the Cold War contained regional conflicts in a bi-polar structure in which the rival superpowers policed their spheres of influence and maintained an equilibrium of power and order. The end of the Cold War loosened these structures, weakening incentives and, in Russia's case, the means for the former superpowers to exercise authority and restraining influence.

American reaction to the changed global environment was also influenced by debates about domestic problems.<sup>7</sup> Concerns with regard to social and economic problems including drugs, crime, unemployment, deficits and the impact of immigration were becoming more prominent. Books such as Arthur Schlesinger's *The Disuniting of America*(1991) and James Davison Hunter's *Culture Wars*(1991) focused attention on the impact of multiculturalism and the polarisation of social values on the cohesion of contemporary American society. These debates all involved the distribution of resources and opportunities in American society.

Huntington's thesis, like Fukuyama's, attempts to understand and explain this post-Cold War world.<sup>8</sup> Albert Weeks notes that Huntington, in focusing on the broad civilisational canvas, returns to the precedents of Arnold Toynbee, Oswald Spengler and Quincy Wright who explored international affairs at the macrocosmic

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Barry Buzan(1991) for a measured discussion of some of these issues, including the possibility of tensions arising from clashes of civilisational identity.

<sup>7</sup> In the American 1992 Presidential election, whilst George Bush sought to reap the rewards of his successes as a proactive foreign policy President and victor of the Gulf War, Bill Clinton, in his successful campaign, pledged his attention to domestic affairs. The minor candidate, Pat Buchanan went further advocating, in a neo-isolationist tone, the withdrawal of the United States from substantial involvement in overseas ventures.

<sup>8</sup> Ahluwalia & Meyer cuttingly describe the International Relations community at this point as a 'floundering congregation ... moving restlessly from one post-modernist church to another trying to find a new faith to fill the vacuum left behind by the collapse of the old-time religion which used to be served up in the Church of the Latter-day Cold War'(1994:21).

level.<sup>9</sup> The recession of the 'macro' school of thought in International Relations and the predominance of the 'microcosmic' level of analysis of interstate relations coincided with the evolution of the Cold War, an international system whose political rigidities were reflected in the rigidity of the models in International Relations thought. The conclusion of the Cold War has seen a return to the 'macrocosmic' perspective, with scholars forced out of their rigid modes of thinking into contemplating in greater depth the complexities of global politics from broader geographical and temporal perspectives. While Huntington's work lacks the depth of historical analysis found in his predecessor, his thesis also explores these broader perspectives through the lens of civilisations.

Like Spengler, Huntington's focus on this broader perspective is one tinged with pessimism rather than optimism. As noted above, it represents a reaction to the end of a form of stability the Cold War was perceived to provide with the disappearance of the Soviet threat. The existence of an enemy can enhance the cohesion of the group. Losing an enemy can undermine a group's sense of identity (Bigo, 1994:14). Huntington has himself observed that the United States has always defined itself in antithesis to someone, be that European monarchy, imperialism or communism. In the post-Cold War environment he asks: 'How will we know who we are if we don't know who we are against?' (Huntington, 1993c:37).<sup>10</sup> Such comments support the contention that Huntington's thesis creates a new 'other' within a dichotomised 'us' and 'them' framework of thinking. This perception is enhanced by Huntington's identification of Islamic and Confucian civilisations as major threats to the West. In this context, it has been argued that Huntington perpetuates an Orientalist conceptualisation of the world (Ahluwalia & Meyer, 1994; Maswood, 1994).

Discussions of Huntington's Orientalist tendencies draw attention to a further important dimension of the context in which his thesis was proposed, the

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<sup>9</sup> Weeks notes that in the 1950s, a vigorous debate took place between the macro-scholars and the micro-scholars, such as Morgenthau, Herz and Aron about the proper methodological focus of International Relations. Weeks argues that Huntington's resurrection of this debate is due, in part, to the failure of globalism to take root (1993:24).

<sup>10</sup> Huntington further comments: 'It is human to hate. For self-definition and motivation people need enemies' (1996a:130).

resurgence of growth and power in Asia. This is highlighted by commentators such as Kishore Mahbubani and Chandra Muzaffar. Huntington's article can be seen as a response to an earlier essay by Mahbubani which coined the phrase 'The West and the rest' (Mahbubani, 1992). Mahbubani suggests that the West is failing to come to terms with the shift in the balance of civilisational power away from the small populations of the West to the developing world. In Huntington's thesis, he sees the West as a civilisation living under 'siege mentality', failing to acknowledge the internal sources of its troubles, seeking instead external enemies (Mahbubani, 1993c).<sup>11</sup> Muzaffar(1994) similarly alleges that Huntington's article reflects Western fears of the challenges presented particularly by the new dynamism of East Asia in the early 1990s. In some sense, therefore, Huntington's argument was stimulated by a more assertive presentation of non-Western values and needs by representatives from regions such as Southeast Asia.<sup>12</sup>

The 'clash of civilisations' thesis is one which was proposed by a widely respected if controversial author with a long-standing interest in the conditions for order in political systems. It was produced at a time of great flux and uncertainty. In part, its aim was to explain these changes, but in many ways, the thesis contributed to the sense of insecurity generated by them. The thesis is not just a scholarly commentary, but a highly political analysis with a strong prescriptive purpose; to advise on the role which the West should play in the post-Cold War world shaped by civilisational interaction.

### *Conceptions of Civilisation*

Civilisations are central to Huntington's vision of the post-Cold War world. Like Toynbee, he argues, '[t]he broader reaches of human history have been the history of civilisations' (1993a:24). He defines civilisations as cultural identities; the

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<sup>11</sup> Mahbubani argues that the West is the cause of its own downfall, firstly in failing to come to terms with the shifting balance of power between the developed and developing world, and secondly due to the 'hubris' of Western society, promoting, for instance, individual freedom to the detriment of the broader interests of the integrity and health of the community (1993c; 1994). See also Jin Junhui(1995).

<sup>12</sup> Other prominent contributors to the 'Asian values' debate include former Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, Malaysian Prime Minister Mohamad bin Mahathir and Bilahari Kausikan from the Singaporean Foreign Ministry.

highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity, short of distinction from other species (1993a:24; 1996a:43). Huntington's civilisations are long-lived, but mortal; and vary in size and composition (1996a:43).<sup>13</sup> He focuses on interaction between eight major civilisations Western, Sinic, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin-American and 'possibly African'.

The most important feature of Huntington's definition is that it is pluralist; he acknowledges several civilisations coexisting at any one time rather than focusing on civilisation as a single entity or linear process.<sup>14</sup> He acknowledges that civilisations blend and overlap, but maintains that the lines between them, whilst seldom sharp, are real. Finally, Huntington's defines civilisations as dynamic; civilisations rise and fall, divide and merge, their identities are redefined (1993a:24; 1996a:43-4). This acknowledgment seems at odds with the overall tone of his thesis which paints a picture of deeply riven, irreconcilable fissures and fault lines of culture. What is consistent in this thesis is the belief that no universal world civilisation exists. Unlike Fukuyama, Huntington does not anticipate the convergence of humanity into a homogenised culture of late modernity:

For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilisation, but instead a world of different civilisations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others. (1993a:49)

Huntington places enormous importance on civilisational interaction in the post-Cold War world. He suggests that civilisational interaction has gone through three phases; the first, prior to 1500 A.D., was one of intermittent interaction amongst geographically distant communities; the second, post-1500 A.D., featured the unidirectional expansion of Western civilisation and its dominance of other civilisations; the third is the current phase in which civilisational interaction is sustained and multi-directional (1996a:48-55). Its significance, he suggests, will be

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<sup>13</sup> Anglophone Caribbean is cited as a small civilisation. Islamic civilisation is analysed as comprising Arab, Turk and Malay subdivisions. Latin America is discussed as a separate civilisation in Huntington's 1993 article, but recognised as an offspring of the West in his 1996 book. Huntington's selection of civilisations and criteria used has been widely discussed and criticised. See for instance Kirkpatrick(1993), Ahluwalia and Meyer(1994:22, fn.1), Voll(1994), Welch(1997).

<sup>14</sup> Huntington acknowledges the concept of Civilisation in the singular as a standard of progress, but chooses to focus on civilisations in the plural in this thesis (1996a:41).



enhanced in post-Cold War international politics, given that civilisational identity is replacing ideology as the fundamental source of conflict:

The fault lines between civilisations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as flash points for crisis and bloodshed ... The 'Velvet Curtain' of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe. (1993a:29, 31)

Although the world will continue to comprise 'overlapping groupings of states', these will be based now on civilisational identities rather than common ideological beliefs (1993b:191; 1996a:125-30), suggesting the state will effectively become an agent of civilisational identity.

Although Huntington highlights civilisational interaction, he focuses almost exclusively on interaction as conflict. He places civilisational interaction into the context of the history of strife in the modern world, progressing from conflicts between princes to conflict between nations, followed by the battle of ideologies. He cites only a few examples of civilisations not engaged in strife, one being the 'Confucian-Islamic connection', a relationship represented as a conspiracy against the West.<sup>15</sup>

The source of conflict for Huntington is difference: the lines between civilisations, particularly those drawn by culture and religion, are considered to form lines of basic and often immutable difference, becoming more prominent in the post-Cold War world. For Huntington, increased interactions 'intensify civilisational consciousness and awareness of differences between civilisations and commonalities within civilisations.' This in turn 'invigorates differences and animosities' (1993a:25-6).<sup>16</sup> Technology is making the world smaller, placing

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<sup>15</sup> The 'Confucian-Islamic' connection refers primarily to relations between Islamic states, such as Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya and others, and China and North Korea. Huntington is particularly concerned with arms transfers between these states (1996a:188).

<sup>16</sup> Huntington's analytical approach can be criticised from a number of angles. Although he observes the existence of ethnic, racial or religious differences in certain conflicts, he actually tells us little about the causes of conflict - conflicts whose origins are often rooted firmly in economic or political issues. The link established between cause and effect is not well established. In a number of the conflicts which Huntington discusses, such as the Gulf and Balkan Wars, the rhetoric of civilisational rallying has been used; but his analysis of these conflicts has been roundly criticised as largely swallowing the rhetoric of the conflicts which has cloaked the very real power interests of the main protagonists (Pfaff, 1993b; Camroux, 1996; Hassner, 1996/7). As Camroux warns, such

civilisations in greater relative proximity thus accentuating their sense of difference;<sup>17</sup> whilst modernisation is accentuating alienation and anomie, weakening the authority of the nation-state and facilitating the growth of religious identity (1996a:76). The immutability of ethnic and religious identities further accentuates, difference whilst the indigenisation of non-Western elites is causing them to turn away from Westernisation (1993a:26-7; 1996a:9). Meanwhile, the growth of economic regionalism is contributing to the cohesiveness of various civilisational groups, or what he later calls 'kin-country solidarity' (1993a:28; 1996a:102-20). Although he acknowledges that cross-civilisational alliances will continue, he anticipates that these will be weakened as cultural identity gains in importance (1996a:128). The most successful alliances and communities, he suggests, are those based on a common culture (1996a:130-5).<sup>18</sup>

Despite acknowledging that '[d]ifferences do not necessarily mean conflict, and conflict does not necessarily mean violence'(1993a:25), Huntington gives little consideration to any form of interaction other than conflict. This allows little space for consideration of how civilisational identities may reach across frontiers to shape values, norms and ideas, or how the interaction of civilisations can also produce positive and dynamic effects. There is only a fleeting sense of similarities, shared concerns or perspectives between civilisations (Huntington, 1996a:318-21; Muzaffar, 1994:11; McNeill, 1997b).<sup>19</sup>

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rhetoric can add a certain legitimacy to what would otherwise appear as a push for power or territory (1996:740). This makes it increasingly important to distinguish between the rhetoric of conflict and the reality of the causes of such struggles. The distance between cultures can be further exacerbated if difference is equated with inequality and inferiority (Rubinstein & Crocker, 1994:120). Huntington does not overtly describe any other civilisation as inferior, but he does paint them as distinctly threatening and prioritises the protection of the values and interests of the West. In part, this derives from Huntington playing the role of both analyst and advocate at the one time.

<sup>17</sup> This is an argument which is reminiscent of Kenneth Waltz's critique of interdependence theory (Waltz, 1970). Huntington further emphasises this point in his 'Response' (1993b:192).

<sup>18</sup> Again, it should be noted that Huntington's discussion is sweeping and generalised. Whilst in his 1996 book he does select instances from modern history to illustrate his points, he does not provide a systematic discussion of the evolving impact of modernisation in the context of this thesis.

<sup>19</sup> Huntington acknowledges the potential for peaceful contacts, but does not explore these in any depth, focusing instead on how a common culture facilitates cooperation. See for example (1996a:130-35). For a study of civilisational interaction which lends greater weight to the role of 'creative engagement' see McNeill(1991; 1997b) or the work of Fernand Braudel. As McNeill(1997b) notes, there will always be tension in interaction, but this tension may be creative

As Alker notes, one of the causes of this confrontational focus is that Huntington's analysis lacks a sense of a broader level of human interaction and identification described in Bull's international society. Huntington's essay, Alker argues, attempts to decapitate civilisation at the global level since it

...virtually ignores global political, technological and economic developments, their global/civilisational implications, and their dialectic with more local cultural unities. (Alker, 1995:553)

In fact, Huntington treats the global level of interaction as involving an elite culture, the 'Davos Culture' rather than one which encompasses humanity in an international society.<sup>20</sup> He does not totally ignore the dialectics of global developments with local cultures, but focuses primarily on their role in accentuating difference (1996a:67, 76). Rather than including creative engagement or exploring the implications of international society, Huntington focuses on establishing irreconcilable difference in his conceptualisation of inter-civilisational relations and the West.<sup>21</sup>

In his belief that increased interaction invigorates difference and animosities, Huntington rejects the view that technology and communication are forces which will reduce difference and conflict in the world.<sup>22</sup> The process of modernisation, he argues, produces a new consciousness of identity which can result in conflict (1968:37-9). His views here are consistent with his earlier work on modernisation in which he argued that transitional societies are more unstable and violent than either traditional or modernised. In the 'clash of civilisations' thesis he continues to emphasise that modernisation and increased interaction does not produce homogeneity, but sustains and ultimately accentuates civilisational identity and assertiveness, exacerbating cultural differences (1996a:67, 78).

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rather than consistently destructive. See also Puchala(1997) for further discussion of other forms of civilisational encounter in a broader historical context.

<sup>20</sup> Huntington derives this phrase from the annual meeting of politicians, financiers, intellectuals and journalists who participate in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (1996a:57).

<sup>21</sup> Rojas de Ferro(1996) views Huntington's focus on irreconcilable difference and conflict less as a tactic and more as a function of his political realism under pressure from the condition of post-modernity.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Bartley(1993)

The main conflicts which Huntington foresees in the post-Cold War world are those on the 'fault-lines' between civilisations. 'Fault line' wars are characterised as protracted, difficult to resolve, religiously charged and susceptible to escalation and internationalisation through 'kin-country' rallying (1996a:252-54). Although he acknowledges that conflicts will occur within civilisations, he assumes that these will be less intense and less likely to spread (1993a:38). This is a remarkable assumption given the intensity of many civil wars, and of intra-Western conflicts during the course of the twentieth century.<sup>23</sup> This suggests an assumed cohesion to the West, and to other civilisations, underlying Huntington's thesis which becomes a central component in his forecast for future world politics.

Finally, Huntington perceives that a certain degree of order will be maintained in the post-Cold War world through the exercise of influence by 'core states' within civilisations. 'Core states' are the most powerful and culturally central states within a civilisation. The role envisaged for them is strongly reminiscent of that of great powers in a classical realist analysis of nation-state politics. Core states provide leadership, authority and discipline within a civilisation, attributes which are legitimised by their cultural commonality with less powerful states.<sup>24</sup> 'A world in which core states play a leading or dominating role' acknowledges Huntington 'is a sphere-of-influence world' (1996a:156). This suggests that the structure of world order he envisages has some parallels with the preceding one.

In this thesis, Huntington demonstrates clear concerns with the loss of the Cold War's 'long peace', and the violence and instability that may evolve in a world of cultural confrontation.<sup>25</sup> As in his earlier work, he maintains a strong interest in the conditions for the maintenance of order in the political system. However, his primary concern is with the interaction between the West and non-West in this environment. 'The central axis of world politics in the future' he anticipates, 'is

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<sup>23</sup> See Welch(1997:206) on the incidence of conflicts within civilisations.

<sup>24</sup> Huntington suggests that a civilisation may have a number of core states, the West for instance historically looking to both the United States and a Franco-German core. Alternatively, it may have no core state. This can pose severe problems inhibiting order within a civilisation and its capacity to negotiate with other civilisations which both weakens its position and threatens the order of other civilisations. This, he suggests, is one of the difficulties of Islamic civilisation (1996a:135, 177).

<sup>25</sup> See also Huntington(1989; 1995b).

likely to be ... the conflict between ‘the West and the Rest’ (1993a:41). Having discussed the historical and intellectual context into which this thesis was born, we now turn to a more in-depth analysis of the conception of the West<sup>from</sup> which it emerges.

### ***The Boundaries of Huntington’s West***

Commenting on Huntington’s original 1993 essay, Fouad Ajami notes that the West itself remains unexamined in Huntington’s essay (Ajami, 1993:3, fn.1).<sup>26</sup> In a sense, the composition of the West is taken for granted. However, we can deduce from Huntington’s discussion thesis important conceptual assumptions about the boundaries and nature of the West

#### ***Territory***

Huntington has a strong sense of the physical location of the West, and a strong territorial conception of the ‘fault lines’ between civilisations. However, his concept of civilisations is built upon culture rather than location. ‘Divorced from culture, propinquity does not yield commonality and may foster just the reverse’ (1996a:130). Huntington’s West has two main territorial subdivisions; Europe and North America (1996a:46). A graphic illustration of his territorial conception of the West is the division which he marks between western and eastern Europe. Using the perimeter of Western Christendom in 1500 A.D., Huntington maps a boundary running from Finland and the Baltic states, through Transylvania into the Balkans which sunders the former Yugoslavia, placing Croatia and Slovenia on the Western side of the divide (1996a:158). This physical division is based on shared histories, cultures and religions which differentiate the peoples of these lands. It marginalises Greece, placing this society in the eastern Slavic-Orthodox civilisation (Voll, 1994).<sup>27</sup> Poland, and Czechoslovakia, part of the Cold War East, in contrast, lie firmly in the Western ambit. On the territorial margins of Huntington’s West are

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<sup>26</sup> Huntington(1996a) does provide some insight into the key qualities of his West, but still lacks an in-depth analysis of the complexities of this civilisation.

<sup>27</sup> Huntington argues that Classical Greece was an important source of Western civilisation, but that modern Greece an Orthodox community, and therefore an anomaly in Western organisations (1996a:162).

'torn countries' such as Turkey and Mexico, whose leadership seek to join the West, but whose ambitions are constricted by their differing history, cultures and traditions (1993a:42; 1996a:139-54).<sup>28</sup>

Japan maintains a curious relationship with Huntington's West. Lying territorially outside the West, it is treated as a distinct civilisation (1993a:28).<sup>29</sup> Huntington regards Japan as clearly modernised, but not necessarily Westernised, yet he suggests it is an 'associate member' of the West (1993a:45). Therefore, although Huntington's concept of the West exhibits a territorial cohesion based around Western Europe and North America, its foundations lie not in the objective attributes of geography, but in the histories, religions and cultures of the societies in these territories.<sup>30</sup>

### *Religion*

For Huntington, religion is a 'central defining characteristic of civilisations' (1996a:47). 'Faith and family, blood and belief, are what people identify with and what they will fight and die for' (1993b:194). He suggests that the major civilisations are associated with major religions, although he does not clearly define the point at which religious and civilisational identity become synonymous.<sup>31</sup> However, religion is treated as a powerful transnational force capable of motivating and mobilising people (1996a:66). Religion is recognised to be a force which can unite peoples, but which also creates intractable barriers. Its revitalisation in response to the pressures of modernisation, he suggests, reinforces

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<sup>28</sup> Russia is also viewed as a torn country, distinguished from the West not only by its ideology during the Cold War, but by its history and traditions in the post-Cold War environment. Yet its culture and society has been deeply influenced by Westernisation since the time of Peter the Great.

<sup>29</sup> As is noted below, as Huntington moves on to discuss economic challenges to the West, Japan emerges more clearly as a distinct and rival civilisation.

<sup>30</sup> Huntington includes Australia and New Zealand as members of the Western community, but discusses Australia as a 'torn' country' due to its efforts to develop a closer relationship with Asia (1996a:151-4).

<sup>31</sup> Many of the civilisations he discusses are identified by their religions rather than their location. For instance, Islamic civilisation is defined primarily through the member societies sharing a common religion, allowing Malay societies to be linked to Arab and Turkic. Similarly, the Confucian philosophy is seen to bind together many of the societies of Asia. In his discussion of the 'kin-country' syndrome, Huntington speaks of religious, ethnic and linguistic brethren supporting one another (1993a:36). Obviously not all three relationships are necessary for a society to regard another as kin as in, for example, the Islamic cases cited.

perceptions of cultural difference (1996a:28, 97, 267). Huntington surveys a worrisome list of inter-religious conflicts in Africa, the Caucuses, Balkans, and in the Indian sub-continent which suggest that religion provides a perfect site for the establishment of irreconcilable opposites:<sup>32</sup>

Even more than ethnicity, religion discriminates sharply and exclusively among people. A person can be half-French and half-Arab ... It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim. (1993a:27)

Predictably, then, religion plays an important part in defining Huntington's West, although he does not identify the West primarily through its religious affiliation, as he does with Islamic or Hindu civilisations.<sup>33</sup> However, Western Christianity provides for him 'historically the single most important characteristic of Western civilisation' (1996a:70). Historically, it provides a sense of community in addition to constructing the boundary marking Western Christendom from Orthodox and Muslim communities (1993a:30; 1996a:70), boundaries which continue to define for Huntington the community of the West.<sup>34</sup>

In earlier work, Huntington explored links between religion and the democratic institutions of the West.<sup>35</sup> Although rejecting the idea that culture presents an irrevocable barrier to democratic progress, he has suggested that other faiths and philosophies, such as Confucianism, present obstacles to the spread and

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<sup>32</sup> As Ghassan Salamé points out, this is a tactic which is useful to the more fundamental on both sides of the spectrum. 'Islamists, too, would like fellow Muslims to believe that Islam is really too self-contained to adjust to modernity or democracy. It is high time to denounce the implicit alliance between the old guard Western orientalists and the new wave local Islamists on the ill-defined presumed uniqueness of Islam' (Salamé, 1993:33). Hence, both parties tacitly reinforce each other's position by reaffirming their sense of threat. Arnold Toynbee commented that a similar strategy was employed effectively by both sides during the Cold War. See Toynbee 'The Present Point in History' (1958a:21).

<sup>33</sup> Huntington argues that the identification of the West with a compass point rather than with a specific location or religion lifts it out of its historical, geographical and cultural context (1996a:47). This accentuates the sense of the West as unique.

<sup>34</sup> He even suggests that identification with Western Christendom could be used to provide a criterion for entry into the European Union, an institution at the core of the West.

<sup>35</sup> Huntington argues that historically Protestantism and democracy were linked, the first democratic impulse coming from the Puritan revolution. Protestantism favoured democracy by stressing individual conscience; through the democratic organisation of Protestant churches; and through its encouragement of economic enterprise. This close equation of Protestantism and democracy stands in contrast to Spengler's view of the West as quintessentially expressed through Catholicism (Huntington, 1991a:30).

interpretation of democratic institutions.<sup>36</sup> Huntington presents Islam as presenting fewer barriers to democracy, with the central exception of its rejection of the separation of the religious and the political community.<sup>37</sup> In highlighting the lack of separation between religion and politics in Islam, we see the significance of the secular nature of the state in Huntington's conceptualisation of the West. Hence, the West, Western Christianity and democracy are inextricably woven in Huntington's conception of the West.

Huntington's focus on Christianity as a foundation of the West evokes an image of religious homogeneity, yet historically, Christianity itself has been a source of conflict within the West, as demonstrated by the wars of religion. Furthermore, the West remains, and is becoming increasingly, religiously heterogeneous.<sup>38</sup> However, Huntington's key contention is that Christian concepts, values and practices pervade Western civilisation.

Perhaps the most significant way is in which religion forms a boundary to Huntington's West is that its chief antitheses are civilisations conceived primarily in religious terms; Islam and Confucianism. Fundamentalist religion, particularly fundamentalist Islam, is one of Huntington's chief concerns (Ahluwalia & Meyer 1994:23). Fundamentalism is treated as a reaction to modernisation, perceived as continuing pre-modern rivalry and enmity between Islam and the Christian West.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, he notes that Confucian societies have been traditionally inhospitable to democracy lacking a tradition of rights against the state; emphasising harmony and cooperation over competition and disagreement; the maintenance of order and respect for hierarchy; a philosophy which defined politics in terms of morality and provided no legitimate grounds for limiting power (1991a:36). Confucian-based authorities, in China and Singapore both championed 'new authoritarianism' and proved hostile to Christianity. Huntington goes on to speculate that the growth of Christianity in South Korea in the 1980s was a major force in bringing about the transition to democracy in 1987/8 (1991a:39).

<sup>37</sup> This means all policy must inherently flow from religious doctrine, contradicting the premises of democratic politics in which policy flows from the people (1991a:40).

<sup>38</sup> As Voll(1994) points out, the West has always been religiously diverse including Protestant, Catholic and Jewish communities. This diversity is enhanced by the growth of non-Christian faiths in Europe and the United States through immigration and conversion.

<sup>39</sup> The observation that Islam is a reaction to modernisation leads Stjepan Meštrovic to identify fundamentalism as an anti-modern rather than a post-modern force. As Alker notes, religious fundamentalism in seventeenth century Europe was associated with the secularising, modernisation process. Nationalism, civic religions and atheistic civil religions, such as positivism and communism, were also reactions to the disintegrative impact of modernisation. Ironically reinvigoration of religious and ethnic identities is a further response to modernisation (Alker, private correspondence).



Whilst the West may have moved on from Christendom, its enemy remains the traditional, pre-modern foe of Islam. Hence, the secular and modern West is constructed in antithesis to pre-modern religiously defined civilisations.

### ***Race***

The distinction drawn by Huntington between race and ethnicity is not always clear. He describes race as a division based on peoples' physical characteristics, in contrast to civilisation which is based on cultural characteristics and clearly states that the cultural distinctions are the most critical. However, he also acknowledges the importance of family and blood lines as an element of identity and difference (1996a:126):

As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an 'us' versus 'them' relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity and religion.  
(1993a:29)

With the demise of ideology, such forms of identification will become more pronounced, argues Huntington: 'With the decline of the need for external unity, internal differences reassert themselves' (Huntington, 1995b:144-5). Ethnicity appears to become compounded with civilisation, with major ethnic conflicts discussed as occurring on the fault lines between civilisations. These include pointing to the collapse of multi-ethnic states and empires, such as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, and the bitter disputes between Armenians and Azeris in Azerbaijan. Ethnicity, along with religion, appears to act as a major signifier of civilisational identity in his discussion (1996a:42).

The growth of ethnic identification and the proximity of peoples of different ethnic identities present, Huntington suggests, the threat of violence and internal attack on the West's cohesion. He does not definitively describe the West in racial terms but his work implies that it is based on European peoples, its cultural foundations firmly rooted in European and Judeo-Christian traditions. This perception is emphasised by the threats which he identifies as emanating from immigration and multiculturalism. Huntington does not appear to be opposed to immigration in principle. In fact, he acknowledges it as a potential source of strength and energy for the West (1988:89; 1996a:304). However, in the 'clash of civilisations' thesis,

he expresses strong concerns about the West becoming swamped by migrants from the non-West; Muslim migrants in the case of Europe, and Hispanic and Asian in the United States.<sup>40</sup> In particular, he questions the capacity of the West to assimilate the latest wave of migrants leading to the prospect of Europe and America becoming 'cleft societies', containing more than one civilisation (1996a:204-6). Again, civilisational divisions here are framed in terms of ethnic and racial differences.<sup>41</sup> This conveys a sense of homogeneity under threat which is compounded in his mind by the politics of multiculturalism in the United States supporting the distinctness of different ethnic groups, rather than encouraging their assimilation (1996a:305). The sense of threat from these sources seem as ominous as the external threat posed by the alleged Confucian-Islamic conspiracy. Although the basis of such social tensions for Huntington may be based on different cultural values rather than physical attributes, it is manifested, or at least described, along the lines of ethnicity.

### ***Power***

Power features prominently in Huntington's consideration of the contemporary West. He distinguishes between 'hard power', based on economic and military capabilities; and 'soft power' relating to the influence of culture and ideology. Soft power, he suggests, is only power when based on hard power (1996a:92). He is direct in acknowledging the significance of both to the West's interaction with other civilisations. The post-Cold War West is described as at the very peak of its power, but simultaneously in a process of retreat or decline, a process to which he wishes to alert the West (1996a:302-8).

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<sup>40</sup> Westerners, he suggests, fear invasion, not by armies and tanks, but by peoples of different languages and beliefs (1996a:200). Huntington even raises the spectre of the West, in this case the United States, as subject to physical threat from potential Mexican revanchist sentiments and demographic growth (1996a:206).

<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, the map of the United States entitled 'The United States: A Cleft Country?' (1996a:205) which describes the projected percentage of population which will be black, Asian, Native American or Hispanic by the year 2020.

As in earlier work, Huntington emphasises the multifaceted nature of the West's power<sup>42</sup> presenting it as an unrivalled military power which largely directs global political issues and is dominant in international economic affairs, Japan providing the only perceived economic challenge (1993a:39; 1996a:81).<sup>43</sup> It also exercises power through its influence over international institutions such as the UN Security Council and the International Monetary Fund from which the West obtains a degree of global legitimacy for the pursuit of its own interests:

The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western pre-dominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values. (1993a:40)

In acknowledging the importance of institutional power, Huntington shares something with Hedley Bull. However, despite noting this level of interaction, he rejects the existence of a developed, global international society (Alker, 1995:552).<sup>44</sup> Huntington's reluctance to acknowledge an international society may stem in part from his political realism in which the anarchy of the international system is not moderated by a supra-national form of community; and in part from his pessimism as to the depth of West's 'soft' power, Huntington viewing the penetration of Western ideas and values into the rest of the world as 'superficial' (1993a:40).

Although Western power is recognised as at its peak, it is also seen to be in retreat. Exhausted by the Cold War, Huntington suggests both the West's capacity and will to dominate is gradually receding as other civilisations experience economic growth and a revival of cultural assertiveness (1996a:82-91, 102-9):

European colonialism is over; American hegemony is receding. The erosion of Western culture follows, as indigenous, historically

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<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, Huntington(1988) where his discussion of the declinist argument highlights the range of American domestic resources and structural power.

<sup>43</sup> Although Huntington does see a further challenge emerging from the economies of East Asia and China.

<sup>44</sup> Although Huntington acknowledges the existence of a developed international system, based on the institutions and practices of European international society, he suggests that the system lacks the common culture necessary to form a genuine international society as defined by Hedley Bull. The common culture which does exist in contemporary international politics, he argues, does so only at an elite level (1996a:54, 58).

rooted mores, languages, beliefs and institutions reassert themselves. (1993b:192)

This analysis seems at odds with his earlier criticism of the prophets of United States declinism (Huntington, 1988), but in keeping with the mood of pessimism which permeates the 'clash of civilisation' thesis. There are strong echoes of Spengler and Toynbee in the sense of the West's dominance and power being transient phenomena on the cusp of a gradual decline.

The West's decline is exacerbated, in Huntington's analysis, by the inclination of the post-Cold War West to divest itself of power, particularly military power, whilst potential rivals, such as Confucian and Islamic states, improve their capacity (1993a:47; 1996a:186-92). In 1989, Huntington warned of the complacency that the 'end of history' argument could breed, placing the West off-guard and ill prepared for new military threats (Huntington, 1989). These fears are reiterated and expanded in the 'clash of civilisations' thesis in an effort to lobby for moderation in the reduction of military capabilities, and for the maintenance of Western military superiority in East and Southwest Asia (1993a:49).<sup>45</sup> This led to the observations that the true aim of this thesis is to provide a rationale for maintaining military budgets in the face of pressure for the reduction of defence spending in the United States (Muzaffar, 1994:13).

Huntington's treatment of Western imperial power is brief, but interesting, with colonial and imperial expansion accepted as a central feature of the rise of the West (1996a:50-2). Expansion is viewed as a natural consequence of rapid economic and industrial growth,<sup>46</sup> but the dominance of the West is treated as remarkable given its scale. Huntington acknowledges the West's capacity to expand was based on

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<sup>45</sup> Huntington's main concerns here appear to be with arms proliferation involving China and North Korea in East Asia, with states such as Pakistan, Iran, Iraq in the south west, and with Libya and Algeria in North Africa. He notes arms control as one method by which the West is seeking to control the expansion of military capabilities of non-Western powers. This suggests that arms control is a further example of the West promoting its own interests under the guise of international norms. The countering response from the non-West is to argue that they too have a right to acquire and deploy weapons for their security, implying that the normative tack can backfire. Huntington notes the United States' shift from a policy of non-proliferation to one of counter-proliferation (Huntington, 1993a:46; 1996a:192).

<sup>46</sup> Huntington's argument suggests that all major powers engaged in expansion and imperialism following the years of rapid industrial and economic growth (1996a:229).

social, institutional, political and technological developments, but argues it was also facilitated by the superiority of Western military organisation and capacity: 'The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion ... but rather by its superiority in applying organised violence' (1996a:51). Therefore, the expansion of the West is viewed as based on hard power. The decline in imperial power appears to coincide with the commencement of a broader decline.<sup>47</sup> However, this is not just perceived as a function of external challenge, but also of internal factors, such as decline in economic productivity and social disintegration.<sup>48</sup> Here again, Huntington's concerns echo those of Spengler who also feared that the West was being weakened by economic competition and social decline.

Huntington does not delve into the history and meaning of Western imperialism in the manner of Edward Said; but he is conscious of, and interested in, the legacy of imperialism; both in the illusion of universality and omnipotence which he suggests it gave to the West; and of the resentment it generated in other civilisations. This is implicit in Huntington's discussion of the human rights debate, particularly in Asia (1996a:192-8); and percolates throughout his discussion of the relationship between Islam and the West

Huntington touches only lightly upon the source of the West's economic power. Despite identifying free markets as a central Western concept, he admits little discussion of economic power structures, and does not specifically discuss the phenomenon of global capitalism.<sup>49</sup> This lack of attention to the economic dimensions of power is a characteristic which can be identified elsewhere in the work of American neo-realists.<sup>50</sup> This may in part stem from Huntington's

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<sup>47</sup> Although he does recognise a shift from a traditional territorially-based imperialism when Europe formed the core of the West, to a transnational form of imperialism under the United States' hegemony of the West (1996a:83).

<sup>48</sup> Huntington lists a range of concerns which include drug abuse; illegitimacy and the breakdown of family; the decline of the work ethic; and of commitment to American intellectual traditions (1996a:82, 304).

<sup>49</sup> For commentators such as Jin Junhui, this is a weakness of the thesis. Jin argues that the thesis' focus on cultural politics neglects the uneven levels of economic development that distinguish countries and will continue to be an important force in world politics (Jin Junhui, 1995:12).

<sup>50</sup> Although elsewhere, Huntington has engaged in debate on the economic dimensions of the United States' power. See Huntington (1988).

scepticism as to the depth of globalisation of Western institutions and ideas; or from an unwillingness to equate the expansion of capitalism with the continued expansion of Western power, in the light of the distinctions he draws between modernisation and Westernisation, and his perception of the retreat of Western power.

Power is, then, a central component of Huntington's West; both in terms of capabilities, and of institutional power. The power of the West to project its cultural and normative ideas is intimately linked to its power in terms of economic and military capabilities. His thesis is, however, strongly pessimistic about the West retaining this power. It is almost as if the thesis is proposed to combat complacency and retreat which Huntington feels would further undermine the power of the West, and the United States in particular.

### *Norms*

Common values and beliefs lie at the very heart of Huntington's conception of civilisations, providing the foundations for cohesion, but also a significant source of conflict between civilisations. The crucial distinctions between human groups, he suggests, concern their values, beliefs, institutions and structures (1993a:25; 1996a:42).

In his earlier work, Huntington had observed the importance of political culture, defined as ideas, values, attitudes and expectations dominant in a society (1971:317). Similarly, in the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, Huntington turns to norms, and the institutions that these generate, to distinguish the West from other civilisations. The norms he identifies as distinguishing the West include individualism, 'a distinguishing mark of the West among twentieth century civilisations' (1996a:71).<sup>51</sup> It is underwritten by the principles of liberty and equality which are exercised through the processes and institutions of the rule of law, providing the basis for constitutionalism and individual rights; and by the existence of social pluralism, which has limited absolutism (1996a:71). Democracy

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<sup>51</sup> In contrast he suggests, Islamic and Asian societies place a greater priority on the collectivity (1996a:108, 214).

and secularism are also critical components of Huntington's West (1993a:40; 1996a:69-72).<sup>52</sup> These norms also form the foundations of the 'American Creed', the civic ethos which forms the core of American cultural identity for Huntington (1996a:305).

Two critical assumptions which are central to Huntington's prescriptions for the West arise from these cultural values. Firstly, the persistence of these values is perceived as unique to the West, distinguishing it from other civilisations (1996a:311). Secondly, since they help define the West, their integrity must be protected if the cohesion of the West's identity is to be maintained.

Huntington suggests that core Western norms have little resonance in other civilisations: '[T]he values that are most important in the West are the least important worldwide'.<sup>53</sup> In this, Huntington rejects any suggestion that the West provides a universal normative framework. On the contrary, he argues that the spread of Western cultural values was a consequence of the colonial and imperial expansion of the West, 'culture almost always follows power' (1996a:91). Therefore, a retreat of Western power implies a retreat of Western norms. He goes on to note that attempts to propagate Western norms have been a source of conflict. This further highlights the importance of norms in defining his conception of the West and its interaction with the non-West.<sup>54</sup> His thesis entails a strong sense of the incommensurability of norms across civilisations; and an assumption of their commensurability within civilisations illustrated by his concepts such as 'civilisational rallying' and the 'kin-country -syndrome'.

The importance Huntington attaches to cultural norms in defining the West is further highlighted by his concerns with immigration and multiculturalism. The unity of the United States, he argues, rests on the bedrock of European culture and

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<sup>52</sup> Huntington guardedly argues that these qualities are not unique to the West, nor have they always been upheld in the West; but they consistently and persistently reoccur within this community. The combination of these qualities, he argues, is what makes the West distinct (1996a:72). However, whilst suggesting that the West is unique in applying the rule of law, he argues that one feature of the Islamic resurgence is the replacement of Western law with Islamic law (1996a:115-6). He does not discuss how the rule of law in Islam differs to that of Western law.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted from Harry Triandis, *The New York Times*, 25/12/1990 (Huntington, 1993a:41).

<sup>54</sup> The question of interaction will be discussed further in the final section of this paper.

political democracy, on the 'American Creed'. Previous migrants were absorbed because they embraced these norms. His concern with contemporary migration and ethnic diversity is that the lack of assimilation of migrant and minority cultures threatens the normative cohesion of American society (1993b:190; 1996a:304). Huntington accuses multiculturalists of further undermining Western cohesion by challenging Western norms, highlighting in particular the substituting of the rights of the individual with the rights of the group (1996a:306). Multiculturalism he argues threatens to 'de-Westernise' the United States, and presents the prospect of a 'clash of civilisations' within the United States, between the multiculturalists and the defenders of Western civilisation.<sup>55</sup> A key assumption here is that maintaining the cohesion of the United States is critical to maintaining the cohesion of the West. It is not so much the multi-ethnic or multi-racial composition of American society *per se* which concerns Huntington, but the threat of normative heterogeneity. This leads Huntington to strongly invoke the West, and the United States in particular, to protect and preserve those distinctive values and institutions which are unique to the West (1996a:311).

### ***Institutions***

In his earlier work, Huntington attached great importance to the role of institutions in political systems, arguing that the degree and complexity of institutions indicate the true level of political development in a given society (1965).<sup>56</sup> Huntington outlines several distinct institutions which evolved in the West but have little resonance in other civilisations. They encompass political democracy and a strong tradition of representative institutions; a free market economy; and the secular, constitutional state governed by the rule of law. Not only do these institutions

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<sup>55</sup> Here, Huntington is drawing in the analysis of James Kurth who shares Huntington's fear of the impact of multiculturalism. Kurth further associates this with the damaging impact of other contemporary political and social theoretical trends, such as feminism and post-modernism, on the cohesion of American societies (Kurth, 1994).

<sup>56</sup> In his analysis of modernisation, it was the degree of institutionalisation, rather than the level of popular participation which influenced the degree of order that a government maintained in that society (1965; 1968:8-12, 28). Although, as Kurth(1994:7) has noted, discussion of political institutions are virtually absent from Huntington's discussion of the 'clash of civilisations', which is perhaps surprising given the focus placed on institutions in his earlier work.



distinguish the West; their incommensurability with other cultures, he suggests, means that efforts to spread them can be provocative.

This is most vividly illustrated by his discussion of democracy, perhaps the core institution of Huntington's West.<sup>57</sup> He sees democratic institutions as a vital part of the West's, and particularly the United States identity, defining that society's *raison d'être*:

The United States is the premier democratic country of the modern world, and its identity as a nation is inseparable from its commitment to liberal and democratic institutions. Other nations may fundamentally change their political systems and continue their existence as nations. The United States does not have that option. (1991b:28-9)<sup>58</sup>

Huntington does not argue that democracy is the only form of government that will provide order, but is unequivocal in his belief that it is the best form of government when applied in the right circumstances, given that it protects personal rights, provides an environment which promotes economic growth and enhances international peace (Brzezinski & Huntington, 1965; Pei, 1991:70; Huntington, 1991b).<sup>59</sup> However in contrast to Fukuyama's clear confidence in the capacity of democracy to become a universal institution, Huntington's work is ambiguous on

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<sup>57</sup> Like Fukuyama, Huntington adopts a minimalist and procedural definition of democracy as involving the selection of the most powerful collective of decision makers through periodic elections in which the candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote (Huntington, 1991b:7). Both omit from their definition the philosophical underpinnings and the stipulations of rights, or some of the norms and values inherent in democracy. Yet it is these aspects of democracy which we see prioritised by, for instance, activists such as Chandra Muzaffar(1993) and Aung San Suu Kyi(1995). As Peter Van Ness has remarked, if we take democracy defined in a minimalist procedural way, this can facilitate a broad range of regimes defining themselves as democratic who may minimise other aspect of democracy found in the philosophical underpinnings, such as the priority on the individual

<sup>58</sup> Huntington actively supports the spread of democracy, viewing it as the best form of government. He also tends to support 'democratic peace theory' (1991b:29), although he qualifies this support by noting Edward Mansfield & Jack Snyder's suggestion that states in the process of democratisation, are more likely to be aggressive and war prone (Huntington, 1996b:6). This resonates with his own observations that societies in transition of modernisation are likely to be less stable and more prone to violence (Huntington, 1968).

<sup>59</sup> Huntington recognised that the communist system provided governance and order (Brzezinski & Huntington, 1965; Huntington 1968:8). He also acknowledges that 'new authoritarianism' found in East Asia has succeeded in providing 'economic prosperity, social order and general well being'. However, in the long term, their capacity to provide good government over a sustained period of time is inhibited by their lack of the institutions of self-reform (1996a:12). See also Pei(1991) for a further discussion on the advantages and short-comings of authoritarianism.

its capacity to spread globally. In his study of the wave of democratisation from the mid-1970s to late-1980s, Huntington concludes that democracy evolved most easily from the culture and history of Western Europe (1991b:298-9). He also notes a coincidence of democratic institutions with Western culture and values, including Western Christianity:

Almost all the remaining non-democracies in the world are either poor, non-Western or both. Their democratisation is not impossible, ... but it is likely to be more difficult. (1996b:5)

He attributes, for instance, the failure of democratisation in Muslim societies in part to the 'inhospitable nature of Islamic culture and society to Western liberal concepts (1996a:114). These observations imply that, in practice, culture presents serious obstacles to democratisation. However, he suggests elsewhere that, theoretically, the barriers which culture presents to democratisation are surmountable. As a dynamic force, culture can adapt and change to new circumstances. The central factors which would facilitate the growth of democracy were economic growth and political leadership:<sup>60</sup>

[E]conomic development should create the conditions for the progressive replacement of authoritarian political systems by democratic ones. Time is on the side of democracy. (Huntington, 1991b:316)

There is here an implicit sense of historicism in Huntington's analysis of the spread of democracy (Munroe, 1994:218).

In the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, Huntington appears more circumspect with regard to the universalising of democratic institutions. Here Huntington argues that democracy is a distinct product of Western culture. Where modern democratic governments have occurred outside of the West, he argues, they have been the product of Western colonialism or imposition (1993a:41). The spread of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s he attributes to the efforts of non-Western societies to emulate the West in order to achieve its success. This produced the

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<sup>60</sup> Like Fukuyama, Huntington stresses the importance of political leadership in the development of democracy. He argues that democratisation was often elite driven, not simply evolving out of favourable conditions, but occurring where political leaders 'willing to take the risk of democracy made it happen' (1991b:108).

impression of a global democratic revolution which was reinforced by the collapse of communism. However, as the power of the West declines, so to does the appeal of its values and institutions. Huntington argues that consequently the appeal of democracy is waning as other, increasingly dynamic, civilisations look to their own traditions for political institutions and legitimacy (1996a:93, 193, 224-5).

Huntington compounds his pessimistic analysis of the prospects for the spread of this Western institution by arguing that attempts to promote democracy can lead to the strengthening of anti-Western forces. In some respects, this argument echoes Toynbee's scepticism of the export of Western institutions to non-Western environments. Democratisation, argues Huntington, can promote communalism and ethnic conflict, creating the 'democracy paradox' of facilitating the empowerment of anti-Western and even anti-democratic groups (1993a:32; 1996b:6): 'Democratisation conflicts with Westernisation, and democracy is inherently a parochialising not a cosmopolitanising process.'<sup>61</sup> Huntington's concern reiterates that also expressed by Fukuyama that the promotion of democratic institutions in divided societies can exacerbate rather than heal divisions. In Huntington's analysis, the divisions of culture appear to play a strong role, setting up a 'West versus the Rest' scenario not really contemplated by Fukuyama.<sup>62</sup>

Huntington has in the past acknowledged structural weaknesses, particularly in the American democratic system, which derive from the subordination of the polity to society, inhibiting formulation of long-range goals and restricting political

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<sup>61</sup> Huntington suggests this possibility arises most directly with Islamic fundamentalist groups, drawing on the experience Algeria in 1992 (1996a:94)

<sup>62</sup> For Mahbubani, it is the democratic institutions which characterise the West which are also a source of its current problems. Mahbubani argues that democratic institutions induce gridlock and inhibit political leadership, thus the ability of the West to respond to the new challenges of the later twentieth century. It inhibits the West from dealing with the serious social and economic problems (Mahbubani, 1993c:14). See also Goldsworthy(1994:7-8). In many respects, Mahbubani's analysis shares much with that of Huntington's. Both see radical change under way, both see Western culture in retreat, both place a great priority on good governance, accepting that in the interim this may require authoritarian government, both see economic development as fundamental to political development and both recognise a weakness in the United States political system deriving from its pluralism and diffusion of authority, the checks and balances system. Where they differ is in their prescriptions for the West and the extent to which the West's difficulties arise from internal tensions rather than external threats.

leadership.<sup>63</sup> In the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, he demonstrates concern for the decline of contemporary Western institutions, but these concerns relate to their dilution in a more heterogeneous environment rather than inherent structural flaws.

Institutions, and the norms upon which they are based, form a crucial element to the Huntington's concept of the West. In contrast to Wight, Bull and Fukuyama, Huntington's pessimism with regard to the commensurability of norms between civilisations compromises the West's ability to provide a universal normative and institutional framework. However, there is little doubt that he values these institutions as providing the best form of governance, and is keen to see them preserved.

### ***Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

Analysis of the boundaries of Huntington's West brings to the fore issues of Western interaction with the non-West. Fukuyama's thesis implies that, in the long-term, interaction will lead to convergence of the West and non-West. In contrast, Huntington suggests that increased interaction will increase the sense of differentiation between these societies. His thesis is premised on viewing the West as one of a number of contemporary civilisations, not the leading representative of a broader human civilisation, categorically rejecting suggestions that mankind forms one community: 'History has not ended. The world is not one. Civilisations unite and divide humankind' (1993b:194).

The concept of difference, so crucial to his concept of 'civilisations', is also critical to Huntington's perception of civilisational interaction. Cultural difference is seen to foster conflict, interaction is portrayed as primarily conflictual in the past and forecast as primarily conflictual in the future. The main axis of difference and conflict which he identifies is the post-Cold War world is 'the West versus the Rest', anticipating: '[t]he dangerous clashes of the future are likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness' (1996a:183).

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<sup>63</sup> He saw this as deriving from the system's evolving from a community which had a history of diversity, pluralism and suspicion of central control (Brzezinski & Huntington, 1965:409, 422).

Huntington does not discuss in depth the nature of the West's relationship with the non-West in the past, other than to indicate that Western dominance meant intra-civilisational interaction within the West determined the course of world politics. Until recently, he suggests, non-Western civilisations were merely the objects of history, not its movers or shapers. The decline of Western dominance has led to a more complex, multi-directional flow of interaction:

With the end of the Cold War, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its center-piece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilisations and among non-Western civilisations. (1993a:23)

Therefore, despite observing that relations between civilisations have always formed the broader reaches of human history, Huntington implies that international politics until recently has been devoid of inter-civilisational relations given its focus on intra-Western relations.<sup>64</sup> Unlike in Toynbee's work, we receive little sense of the course of world history outside of the history of the West, and primarily the modern West at that.

One important source of conflict between the West and other civilisations identified is struggles for power (1993a:40). Huntington suggests interaction has been further aggravated by the tendency of the West to promote its ideas as universal (1996a:183). In the late twentieth century, he argues, the concept of a universal civilisation helps justify Western cultural domination of other societies (1996a:66), but '[w]hat is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest' (1996a:184). Huntington presents the spread of Western culture as superficial and a function of Western power rather than a demonstration of universal progress (1996a:58). Western universalism is consequently perceived as false and provocative:

...the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military pre-dominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilisations. (1993a:29)

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<sup>64</sup> This perception is also evident in the Western-centric focus of the discipline International Relations to date.

Huntington further characterises Western universalism as immoral and dangerous. It is immoral since culture follows power; therefore a universal culture would require a universal power, implying the reinstigation of imperialism. It is dangerous, he suggests, since it would lead to a major inter-civilisational war, in which the West could well be defeated (1996a:310-1).

Consequently, unlike more liberal commentators, Huntington firmly rejects the idea that the end of the Cold War will produce the universalisation of liberal democracy, or broad cultural homogenisation through increased communications and modernisation.<sup>65</sup> For Huntington, this argument suffers from the 'single alternative fallacy' in failing to acknowledge the persistence of other secular and religious challenges to Western liberal democracy (1993b:191; 1996a:66). Although acknowledging the West as the sources of modernisation, he rejects the equation of modernisation with Westernisation as 'a totally false identification' (1996a:69, 310):

The presumption of Westerners that other peoples who modernise must become 'like us' is a bit of Western arrogance that in itself illustrates the clash of civilisations. (1993b:192)

These observations echo his earlier rejection of modernisation was a homogenising process which implied uni-linear progress. Modernised societies, he argued, would not necessarily seek to adopt Western values and institutions.<sup>66</sup> In the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, he again argues that although modern societies have commonalities, they remain culturally distinct. He goes further, suggesting that modernisation can accentuate such differences; through increasing contact; through

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<sup>65</sup> It is interesting to note the importance Huntington attaches to the changing relationship between the West and non-Western elites. Huntington has always attached importance to the role of elites in influencing the direction of change in political structures and in providing leadership (1968; 1991b; 1996a:94). In the contemporary world, he notes the increasing 'indigenisation' of these elites; their turning away from, rather than towards, identification with Western culture (1993a:27).

<sup>66</sup> Huntington described most writers on modernisation as characterising modernisation as revolutionary, complex, systemic, global, lengthy, homogenising, irreversible and progressive. Many of these assumptions he challenged. He was particularly critical of the failure of modernisation theory to produce a model of Western society, 'meaning late twentieth century Western European and North American society', which could be compared and contrasted with the model of modern society. 'Implicitly, the two are assumed to be virtually identical. Modern society has been Western society writ abstractly and polysyllabically. But to non-modern, non-Western society, the process of modernisation and Westernisation may appear to be very different indeed' (1971:295).

the confidence generated by prosperity; and by creating the need for stronger local identities to respond to the social problems caused by modernisation (1996a:78).<sup>67</sup> These views distinguish Huntington as clearly from contemporary liberals as his views on political development differentiated him from certain modernisation theorists in the 1970s. They also highlight the significance of the cultures, structures and histories of different civilisations in forthcoming international relations, and significantly complicating relations between West and non-West.

Although Huntington identifies West/non-West interaction as a central axis of world politics, and a potentially volatile one, he does not represent the West's relationship with all societies of the non-West as identical, nor the non-West as homogeneous. However, his thesis presents the non-West as largely reacting to the challenges of modernisation and Westernisation presented to it by the West. The non-West is given three options: rejection of the West, an option dismissed as unviable in today's deeply interconnected world; 'Kemalism' or 'band-wagoning', attempts to embrace Western values and join the West; and reformism or 'balancing' the West, in other words, efforts 'to modernise but not to Westernise' (1993a:41; 1996a:72-4). This analysis places countries that wish to 'band-wagon' in a difficult position. 'Joining the West' suggests not only modernisation, but also the adoption of Western values and institutions, producing 'torn countries' (1993a:42). In the context of this discussion, the most interesting 'torn-country' is undoubtedly Russia. As the Soviet Union, Russia constituted the quintessential East in the context of the Cold War. In 1989, Huntington was slow to accept that communism was truly defeated (1989:5); he is even more cautious about dismissing Russia as a threat to the West. Russia for him remains a great power. Whereas Fukuyama sees the end of the Cold War as leading to the convergence of the systems of Russia and the West, Huntington sees them as

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<sup>67</sup> The revolt against the West, he observes, was originally legitimated by a recourse to Western values, when the West was the dominant power, 'it is now legitimated by asserting the superiority of non-Western values' (1996a:93).

becoming more distinct. For Huntington, the Marxism of the Soviet Union provided a point of commonality between Russia and the West.<sup>68</sup>

The conflict between liberal democracy and Marxism-Leninism was between ideologies which, despite their major differences, were both modern and secular and ostensibly shared ultimate goals of freedom, equality and material well-being. A Western democrat could carry on an intellectual debate with a Soviet Marxist. It would be impossible for him to do that with a Russian Orthodox Nationalist. (1996a:142)

Huntington's analysis pivots on the perception of traditional Russia as a member of a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilisation. Therefore, he sees the post-Cold War Russia as a torn country, riven by a resurgence of the debate on whether its identity belongs to the Slavic east or to the West. Consequently, a swing towards traditionalism suggests to Huntington a potentially more conflictual and distant relationship between Russia and the West in the post-Cold War era (1996a:142-4).

However, Huntington anticipates the greatest challenge to the West coming not from Russia, but from other civilisations that have responded to the West through 'reformist' policies, seeking to modernise, but not Westernise; not to join but to compete with the West through internal development and cooperation with other non-Western powers (1993a:45; 1996a:74). Japan might appear the most obvious example of such a society, but as noted above, Japan is tolerated as an 'associate member' of the West; a rival, but not a conspirator. The 'reformist' category includes instead members of the 'Confucian-Islamic connection', perceived as the West's most serious rivals, challenging Western interests, values and power through their dynamism and their sense of cultural superiority (1996a:102). He anticipates growing hostility, and the strengthening of an emergent alliance between key states within these civilisations, identifying as areas of likely tension weapons proliferation, human rights, and immigration (1996a:185-207, 239).

Islam is presented as a long-standing enemy of the West and the site of the next cultural confrontation. It is represented as an inherently violent civilisation: 'Islam', argues Huntington, 'has bloody borders'(1993a:35; 1996a:254-8). He

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<sup>68</sup> In Brzezinski & Huntington(1965), Huntington notes that the similarities between the Soviet Union and United States are often overlooked.



focuses predominantly on Islam interacting with other civilisations in conflict rather than in peaceful interchange.<sup>69</sup> His broad brush treatment of the history of Islam's relationship with the West is striking. It sweeps across thirteen hundred years of history to provide a neat, linear continuum between the Crusades, the resistance to European colonialism and the Gulf War, only briefly touching upon nuances or contextual details which might illuminate the complexities of the relationship between these close civilisational cousins. As Muzaffar notes, there have been constructive and cooperative dimensions to the relationship between the West and Islam.<sup>70</sup> However, there is little sense of affinity in Huntington's reading of history. Instead, the relationship is presented as one in which Islam poses a continual and growing threat to the West, a relationship of long-standing rivalry and hostility, based upon theological differences, further aggravated by qualities such as monotheism, universalism and evangelical natures shared by both cultures. The rivalry of the past is for Huntington further stimulated by a resurgence of Islam in the late twentieth century, a resurgence viewed as a product of, and an effort to come to terms with, modernisation stimulated by the West (1996a:116). Although Huntington identifies its causes in social mobilisation and population growth, the impact of this resurgence, he suggests, has been to feed conflict which has manifested itself in a quasi-war between Islam and the West in progress since 1980 (1996a:216).

Huntington's representation of Islam is widely criticised as providing an extremist and undifferentiated image of Islamic civilisation, exaggerating the degree to which 'fundamentalist' forces represent Islamic societies, underestimating the degree of disunity in the Muslim world, and overestimating the strength of the position of Muslim communities in many of the conflicts cited.<sup>71</sup> Huntington does discuss

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<sup>69</sup> Chandra Muzaffar accuses Huntington of being an 'Islam baiter' who has failed to acknowledge that in many instances the 'Islamic threat' is, in fact, the struggle of Islamic groups and individuals to free their communities from continued Western domination. See also Rubinstein & Crocker(1994) and Farley(1994) who discuss social, economic and historical factors contributing to the rise of the popularity of Islamists groups.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, Islam provided the foundations for the growth of mathematics, the sciences, architecture and agriculture in medieval Europe (Muzaffar, 1994:11).

<sup>71</sup> See for instance, Ajami(1993:5), Kirkpatrick(1993:23), Camroux(1996:741). Mahbubani argues that Huntington fails to acknowledge that in many situations it is Muslim communities who are in the weaker position: '[i]n all conflicts between the Muslims and pro-Western forces the Muslims

divisions within Islam, suggesting that its lack of political cohesion is a source of instability; but he goes on to argue that conflict with the West, such as during the Gulf War, can provide a focus for unity within Islam replenishing the perception of Islam as a threat (1996a:174-8, 248-252). This is further enhanced by his suggestion that Islam's hostility to the West is not limited to fundamentalists, but can be found in many sectors of Muslim societies (1996a:214).

Syed Javed Maswood parallels Huntington's monolithic depiction of Islam with the monolithic depiction of the communist movement in American Cold War scholarship. The myth of the monolithic enemy, he suggests, facilitates Western unity and heightens vigilance. For Maswood, Huntington's argument demonstrates the continuance of the Orientalist mind set in the late twentieth century, which

...refuses to understand the diversity within Islam for the convenience of simple explanation ... It is Orientalist scholarship that has invested Islam both with an internal unity and an external political ambition. (Maswood, 1994:19)<sup>72</sup>

As Ahluwalia & Meyer note, this construction of an identity juxtaposed to an essentialised 'other' is a feature of International Relations and particularly Realist discourse (1994:25). In this context Huntington's analysis of civilisational interaction continues the preoccupation of the discipline with Western concerns, within an established framework of assumptions about the nature of interaction, rather than introducing radically new perspectives on a multicultural system of world politics.

What distinguishes Huntington's discussion of the Islamic threat is his tying it to a conspiratorial connection with Confucian civilisations (Bigo, 1994:12). The Confucian challenge to the West is evident to Huntington in a number of areas, one of the most concrete being arms transfers between China and the Middle East, particularly, Iran and Pakistan (1993a:47), which for Huntington evidence 'an extraordinary level of commitment and cooperation between these countries'

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are losing, and losing badly, whether they be Azeris, Palestinians, Iraqis, Iranians or Bosnian Muslims' (Mahbubani, 1993c:12).

<sup>72</sup> Maswood(1994) argues that the fundamentalist movement has emerged with the political task of reforming Muslim society. It is essentially a reaction to Westernisation, though not modernisation, which Muslims fundamentalists distinguish between.

(1996a:190).<sup>73</sup> Evidence for this conspiracy is regarded by many critics as somewhat thin. As Goldsworthy notes, Huntington's argument mystifies what might otherwise be regarded as self-interested transactions of states in the name of cultural alliance (Goldsworthy, 1994:7).<sup>74</sup> However, for Huntington, this is one aspect of the broader challenge which China and Asia presents to the West. China is perceived as in the course of resuming its traditional role of hegemon in East Asia, evolving economically and militarily into a power of unprecedented size (1996a:169-74, 230).<sup>75</sup> Interaction between China and the West, he observes, is becoming increasingly antagonistic as China, and Asia in general, becomes increasingly assertive and less inclined to accept Western values, leadership or direction (1996a:222).<sup>76</sup>

Muzaffar interprets Huntington's warnings as 'yet another attempt to curb the rise of yet another non-Western economic competitor' (Muzaffar, 1994:15).<sup>77</sup> Fearing the challenges presented by the new dynamism of East Asia in the early and mid 1990s, Huntington, he suggests, is seeking 'to preserve, protect and perpetuate Western dominance' by conjuring up spectres such as the Confucian-Islamic connection (Muzaffar, 1994:13). Huntington's goal here, he argues, is to persuade the United States that it should not reduce its military capability by presenting Islam and Asia as direct physical threats demanding readiness and cohesion of the West.

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<sup>73</sup> For Huntington, what makes this different to a conventional arms race is that whilst one side is seeking to increase its arms, the other side, the West, is seeking to limit rather than balance the opposition's arms. This tactic of preventing arms build up whilst simultaneously reducing its own arms capabilities is a matter of some concern to a strategist like Huntington who has maintained a long-held interest in the military dimensions of power.

<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Muzaffar notes Western states and companies trade widely across the world, including with Islamic countries, yet these deals are not taken as evidence of cultural alliances. Muzaffar points out that most Muslim countries buy their arms from the United States rather than China. He also notes that Chinese support for Muslim states in international forums on issues such as Bosnia and Israel was not forthcoming (1994:14).

<sup>75</sup> China, he suggests, has the potential to become 'the biggest player in human history' (1996a:231).

<sup>76</sup> For Huntington, a prime example of this is the human rights debate and, in particular, the course of the 1993 UN Conference on Human Rights where Asian states clearly articulated a distinct perspective (1996a:192-8).

<sup>77</sup> Mahbubani and Muzaffar both present the West and its tradition of dominance as the root cause of global conflict (Mahbubani, 1992:70, Muzaffar, 1994).

Muzaffar's criticism's were written in response to Huntington's original 1993 essay. His concerns appear to be born out by the 1996 book where Huntington acknowledges more fully the challenge he sees emanating from Asia; its rapid economic growth producing a shift in the balance of power between Asia and the West bringing to the fore fundamental differences between Asian and American values (1996a:103, 225). Huntington is conscious of the pride and confidence this growth has engendered, noting arguments that this growth is founded on the strengths of Asian and Confucian rather than Western values (1996a:107-9). This permits him to depict Asia's challenge to the West as cultural and civilisational, as well as economic.<sup>78</sup>

As Huntington's vision of interaction between the West and non-West develops, the political character of his thesis becomes increasingly evident. The thesis provides not just a scholarly analysis of world politics, but explicit prescriptions for containing inter-civilisational conflict and minimising threats to the West and the United States. This advice is based on a perception of the cultural world order premised on civilisational spheres of influence. He advises consolidation of civilisational identity at home and non-interference abroad: 'Those who do not recognise fundamental divides ... are doomed to be frustrated by them' (1996a:309). In essence, Huntington recommends universalism at home and multiculturalism abroad, reversing what he perceives as the current United States' policies of multiculturalism at home, and universalism abroad.

This has major implications for his perception of the West. Huntington calls upon the West to consolidate its own identity, resisting domestic multiculturalism and strengthening traditional cultural ties in foreign policy by, for instance, rejuvenating the Atlantic Alliance. The maintenance of Western unity, he argues, is essential to slowing its decline in world affairs (1996a:307-8): 'In the clash of civilisations, Europe and America will hang together or hang separately'

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<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere, Huntington has discussed the challenge presented by other Confucian states, such as Singapore, and to a lesser extent, Taiwan, Korea and Japan, to Western interpretations of democracy (1991b; 1996b). In *The Third Wave*, Huntington considered the way in which the 'dominant party system' in East Asia had produced government blocks so powerful as to exclude the remaining opposition parties from government (1991b:304).

(1996a:321). Equally significantly, he advises that the United States and the West in general abstain from interfering in other cultures to promote Western values and norms. The abstention of core states from interference in other civilisations is one of Huntington's key rules for peace in a multi-civilisational world (1996a:316). This implies some measure of withdrawal by the West in recognition of the new balance of power, and has enormous implications for the normative foundations of interaction in the international system.<sup>79</sup>

However, Huntington aims not so much at sanctioning the West's retreat, but at enhancing and even renewing the West's power. In his 1993 essay, he suggests that in the short term, the West should pursue a policy

...to support in other civilisations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests; to strengthen international institutions that reflect and legitimate Western interests and values and to promote the involvement of the non-Western states in those institutions. (1993a:49)

Given his analysis of the problems of transferring Western values and concepts, this would appear to be a provocative and not necessarily productive set of policies.

Huntington's prescription for the West's interaction with other civilisations are a blend of co-option, cooperation, and containment; co-option in encouraging the 'Westernisation' of Latin-America; cooperation in seeking to improve relations with civilisations he perceive as less hostile, such as Japan and Russia; and containment of Sinic and Islamic civilisations through restraining their military development. But in addition, he recommends the maintenance of Western technical and military superiority over other civilisations, despite having acknowledged that such policies could be provocative (1993a:29; 1996a:312). His recommendations are clearly aimed at retaining the West as a powerful, if more contained, actor in world affairs.

Huntington somewhat belatedly suggests that in addition to containment and co-option, the West should strive to achieve a better understanding of the perceptions and interests of other civilisations, to identify commonalities between cultures

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<sup>79</sup> See McNeill(1997b) for a discussion of the 'bunker mentality' which he believes Huntington demonstrates in this thesis.

(1996a:318-21); but the overall tone of his thesis is pessimistic. He notes, for instance, that the conclusion of other great twentieth century conflicts, the First and Second World Wars, were greeted with euphoric expectations of a more peaceful world. These expectations were shattered by new conflicts:

Now, six years after the collapse of European communism, our euphoric moment has passed, and we too have become sadder and wiser. A single dominating ideological conflict has given way to a multiplicity of ethnic conflicts, the stability of a bipolar world to the confusion and instability of a multi-polar and multi-civilisational world, and the potential horror of global nuclear war to the daily horror of ethnic cleansing. (1996b:4)

Elsewhere, Huntington argued that in the late 1980s, the United States reached the zenith of a wave of declinism, the fifth since 1950. However, each of these waves helped to generate counteraction to prevent the shrinkage of American power (1988:94-6). It seems that Huntington himself is helping to generate a sixth wave of declinism, warning of the retreat not just of American, but also of Western power in response to external and internal forces. Perhaps this is similarly intended to generate a reaction to consolidate the power and identity of the West in the face of perceived challenges.

As noted, Huntington's thesis reflects a wave of pessimism in the American and European intellectual communities in the early 1990s, signalling disillusionment with the post-Cold War world. In 'The Coming Anarchy', referred to earlier, Robert Kaplan(1994) also painted a picture of rising tensions, conflict and challenges to modern political institutions and structures. However, Kaplan explores a range of forces, such as population growth, migration and ecological degradation, which contribute to social dislocation and the collapse of authority structures, particularly in post-colonial states. Huntington's analysis is more narrowly focused. Although he recognises the pressures which modernisation place on local and global politics, he concludes that instability primarily derives from differences, accentuated by proximity. The West should therefore support those that resemble it and reduce the effectiveness of those that threaten it. Hence Huntington's main recommendation for meeting the challenges of the late twentieth century is a policy of containment, both internally and externally. Huntington's thesis may have more in common with Kennan's 'X' article than its

radical analysis of a fluid post-war situation and the spectacular impact which it has made on intellectual and policy communities.

## *Conclusion*

Huntington presents the contemporary world as one in flux stimulated by the release of the constraints of the Cold War, and by the pressures of modernisation, a force which he long ago identified as volatile and destabilising. In contrast to more liberal authors such as Fukuyama, Huntington chooses to concentrate on the forces of fragmentation rather than those of unification in the contemporary world. In this context, his concept of civilisations and of the West directly challenges liberal concepts which see the West as a universal civilisation. Instead, Huntington presents a pluralist conception of civilisations within which the West is unique, possibly even superior, but categorically not universal (1996a:311). In this, Huntington finds common ground with Spengler and, to some extent with Toynbee. However, his argument lacks the depth of historical analysis found in his predecessors. Whilst Huntington's discussion is littered with references to the modern histories of a variety of peoples and states, the thesis lacks a considered historical discussion of important issues, such as the impact of modernisation or relations between Islamic and Western peoples. Furthermore, unlike Spengler and Toynbee, Huntington does not locate the history of the West in a broader world history since world history is treated as Western history until the current era.

Huntington suggests that his thesis on civilisational interaction offers a new paradigm to understand the cultural world order (1993b). However, his hypotheses have a familiar ring of a civilisational 'war of all against all'. In his 'new' paradigm, the significant units of the international system may be civilisations rather than states, but the structure of the international system continues to be defined primarily by conflict between self-regarding units. His world view is informed by the concept of power politics leading to a vision of the world dominated by conflict, and the assumption that power continues to be contested in an anarchical environment.<sup>80</sup> In effect, Huntington's thesis seeks to capture the

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<sup>80</sup> There is a danger that the expectation of conflict can contribute to the generation of conflict. Furthermore, the focus on the irreconcilability of civilisations, rather than on their techniques for

concept of inter-civilisational relations and co-opt it into neo-realism, casting some doubt on the novelty of the paradigm.

Bigo(1994) describes Huntington as part of a community of analysts and commentators whose positions were premised upon the sense of insecurity which characterised the Cold War. 'Orphaned' by the events of 1989-90, this community benefits from the generation of a renewed sense of insecurity; related, for instance, to drugs, immigration and disease. Whilst these threats are primarily perceived as arising from the outside, from the South rather than the East, they appear instrumental in generating decay and fragmentation within.<sup>81</sup> The generation of insecurity is therefore presented as a tactic of adjustment to the new global conditions. Huntington's thesis appears as one engaged in 'looking for enemies',<sup>82</sup> replacing the West's old adversary, the Soviet Union, with a new one to sustain the traditional structures of international relations as perceived by conflict theorists. While defining civilisations as dynamic, interactive entities, he portrays them as immutable communities whose differences are compounded and confirmed by conflict on the local and global levels. While briefly he appeals for understanding and toleration among cultures, the thrust of his thesis advocates the promotion and protection of Western values. We sense that Huntington is seeking to shake the West, and particularly the United States, out of complacency. This is achieved by portraying it as under imminent threat from an external enemy, the Confucian-Islamic connection; and an internal enemy, the loss of Western normative homogeneity. The constitution of enemies is therefore a critical element in Huntington's conception of the West.

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coexistence, could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If this is permitted to happen, there is a danger of smothering the insights that this branch of research may offer us by focusing on one, largely negative aspect of inter-civilisational interaction.

<sup>81</sup> Hence minority groups, immigrants, criminals become associated with an external threat and something of an alien within. These new forms of threats combine regional conflict, religious fundamentalism, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, drugs and immigration. Bigo observes that, for once, this was a discourse which began in Europe and was exported to the United States. Regis Debray writing in 1989, he notes, anticipates Huntington in his warnings that NATO has neglected its southern flank (Bigo, 1994:10).

<sup>82</sup> This is a phrase used by Dr. Peter Van Ness in conversations with regard<sup>to</sup> the Huntington essay.



A central element of Huntington's discussion is how the West should cope with the new cultural world order. Huntington represents the West as a major power, on the cusp of decline, threatened with disintegration within and diminution without. Spengler and Toynbee demonstrated similar concerns. Like Toynbee, Huntington warns his community of potential degeneration, but suggests that the West has the capacity to avoid this. This contrasts with the presentations of Spengler and of Fukuyama which, whilst differing in their tone and readings of the future, leave a strong sense of the West swept along by the forces of history, rather than as an agent determining history's course.

Huntington has a well-developed sense of territorial links, and of ethnic and religious affinities as characterising cultures; but the critical factors which distinguish civilisations for him are norms and values. In this respect, he portrays the West as a resilient culture which, although heterogeneous, has been strong enough to absorb incoming cultures. This quality is perceived by Huntington as under threat in the era of late modernity. Issues such as racial and cultural integration present a much stronger sense of threat to the cohesion of Huntington's West than they do in Fukuyama's.

Huntington obviously values the norms and institutions of Western society as the best, if not the only, way to provide order and governance. However, like Toynbee, he is extremely sceptical of the feasibility and desirability of transferring norms and institutions across cultures. However, whereas Toynbee was concerned about the destructive impact of Western norms and institutions on non-Western society, Huntington tends to focus on how such transfers feed tensions between the West and non-West, empowering anti-Western forces. He focuses primarily on the West's security and interests. His scepticism with regard to the transfer of norms and institutions derives from his sense of civilisations as ultimately distinguished by a unique blend of norms and values, and by his sense of the West as unique rather than universal. Like Bull, Huntington acknowledges the normative and institutional dimensions of Western power; but although he recognises that the West has exercised global power and influence, he ties this firmly to its capacity to project military and economic power, rather than seeing the West as constructing a lasting, universal normative framework for global political interaction.

The implications of Huntington's thesis and the prescriptions which it entails are substantial. Expectations of cross-cultural cooperation are not eliminated but are substantially weakened. The thesis suggests a system in which order is maintained through an ethos of non-intervention which substantially undermines the concept of an evolving cosmopolitan framework, replacing this with an ethos of cultural relativism. Huntington's work suggests that the West needs to consolidate its own identity and prepare to defend this in an anarchical world of inter-civilisational power politics, rather than seeing itself engaged in processes of progress or cultural convergence through globalisation as suggested in Fukuyama. As in Toynbee and Bull, this entails acknowledging the diminution of Western power in the face of the resurgence of non-Western civilisations. How the West continues to promote its own interests and project power, yet maintain a policy of non-intervention is unclear, but it does imply a policy of constructive interaction, particularly amongst the core states of particular civilisations.

Huntington's thesis has been criticised for its reduction of complex events and patterns to a simple but ominous structure. Yet as David Welch(1997) notes, part of the power and appeal of Huntington's analysis of civilisational interaction lies in its bold simplicity and consequent accessibility as a tool to understand a complex environment. Yet this is also where its weaknesses lie since the thesis reduces the complexities of world politics and civilisational interaction to the dynamics of cultural rivalry and suspicion.

## *Chapter Eight*

### *The Occident and its Significant 'Other': Edward Said's West*

Some of the most vigorous debate in recent decades on the relationship between the West and non-West has been stimulated by ideas produced not in the disciplines of history or political science, but in literary criticism. Although his major works focus primarily on the analysis of literary texts, Edward Said's work is deeply informed by, and engaged in commenting upon, the dynamics of political and cultural interaction in world politics, and the relationship of the West to the non-West. His book *Orientalism*(1978) was one of the founding texts of post-colonial studies, a movement which through the examination of literature, art and history provides a critical reassessment of the West's interaction with the non-West from the perspective of the non-West. His perspective is a critical one which draws deeply from influences outside, as well as within, the West.

The conception of the West which he presents is complex and operates at two levels. On the first level, Said represents how the West saw itself, drawing on a range of literature from Europe and the United States. On the second, he provides his own critical representation of the West which portrays it primarily as an imperialist entity. This dual approach, which reflects upon how the West constructs in own identity, contrasts with the preceding authors.

Key themes in Said's constitution of the West further distinguish it. Firstly, as noted above, Said focuses strongly on the West as an imperialist entity. Of the preceding authors, only Bull, and to a more limited extent Wight, reflect in any depth on this dimension. However, empire stands at the very heart of Said's modern West (1993:10-2). For him, 'the principle of domination and resistance based on the division between the West and the rest of the world ... runs like a

fissure throughout' (1993:60). Empire is not viewed simply as a form of political or economic association, constituted by elites, but as a system which penetrates all levels of the metropole and the colonies. Its durability is supported by its reconstitution at all levels of society and by popular acceptance in the metropole of the necessity of empire. Secondly, Said suggests that knowledge and information are central elements of Western power. Whilst all the preceding authors recognised intellectual and technical capacity as critical features of the West, again, only Bull reflects more deeply on the significance of knowledge structures to the West's interaction in the cultural world order. Said goes deeper again, to consider the role and deployment of knowledge in constituting the West. Thirdly, in his conception of civilisational interaction, Said occupies a position between the universalist assumptions of Fukuyama and the segregated and incommensurable vision of civilisations found in Huntington and Spengler. He believes in cultural pluralism, but has an underlying sense of a shared humanity which can often be obscured by cultural differentiation. There are some parallels here with the concepts of cultural world order found in Toynbee and, again, in the international society authors. Said's cultures are plural, but interactive, dynamic and constantly in the process of reconstitution. His work raises questions about how we recognise the plurality of cultures without obscuring this human community. Finally, Said presents the West as an identity developed and represented in antithesis, to the East or the Orient.

This discussion draws primarily on two of his most significant works, *Orientalism*(1978) and *Culture and Imperialism*(1993) both of which are deeply concerned about the politics of representation. In *Orientalism*, he discusses the creation and reiteration of the Orient in Western scholarly and institutional texts of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This theme is developed in *Culture and Imperialism* in discussing relations between the 'metropolitan' West and its overseas territories. In both works, Said argues that essentialised representations of the non-West reinforced the West's sense of its own identity as a superior culture. In *Orientalism*, Said deals almost exclusively with the West's representations of Arab peoples. In *Culture and Imperialism*, his discussion ranges the globe, considering literature and art which represents peoples from India, Africa, Ireland, the Caribbean and Asia.

In a 1995 review of *Orientalism*, Said described the intention of this work as a 'multicultural critique of power using knowledge to advance itself', arguing that this is a work which is anti-essentialist in its discussions of cultures and civilisations (1995:4). That is to say, Said strives to dissect the images of cultures as organic, homogenous, natural entities in order to reveal the way in which images of one's own and of other cultures are constructed through the deployment of representations and of knowledge.

### ***Said's Era and Influences***

Said's background provides a strong basis for an interest in inter-civilisational relations and the role of the West. He was born in west Jerusalem in 1935, but left Palestine for Egypt in 1947 as it became engulfed in the war which followed the withdrawal of the British mandate. He completed his secondary education in the United States and subsequently studied English and History at Princeton, receiving a doctorate from Harvard University in Comparative Literature. He then became a university teacher of Comparative Literature, and currently holds a chair at Columbia University, New York. Said did not return to Palestine/Israel until 1992.<sup>1</sup>

Although Said grew up in a relatively affluent and secure home and has pursued a successful career in the United States, a sense of exile permeates his work. The displacement experienced by Said and the Palestinian people in general critically shapes his perceptions of power and of geography.<sup>2</sup> Although an Anglican who has lived most of his life in the West, there is little sense that his identity as a Christian has mitigated his sense of displacement. In fact, his discussion of his background heightens the sense of Palestine as a location which was/is integral to Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, challenging automatic associations of Christianity with the West. There is little sense of Said feeling an outsider within the predominantly

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<sup>1</sup> Said did travel to the Middle East region between 1967 and 1992, but not to Israel due to restrictions likely to arise from his own political affiliations (Hovsepian, 1992; Said, 1994a).

<sup>2</sup> For an account of Said's sense of displacement, see 'Return to Palestine-Israel' in Said(1994a) and Said's text in his collaboration with photographer Jean Mohr in *After the Last Sky* (Said, 1985b). See also Hovsepian(1992:7) on how this experience undermined his sense of the 'stability of geography and the continuity of land'.

Islamic Palestinian community. However, ultimately, it is not his religious identity, but Said's identity as a secular scholar which is most significant for him; secularism providing a 'space for discussion' uninhibited by essentialisations of theological identities (1994b:24). He is critical of essentialised images of Islamic society often found in Western literature and commentary, but also critical of equally reductionist Islamist perspectives (1995:3).

Said is a renowned advocate of the Arab and Palestinian positions in the international and American communities, representing a voice often silenced or discredited in the United States (Thomas, 1994:26-7). He has written extensively on Palestine, Middle East politics and American foreign policy, and demonstrates a strong personal identification with the plight of Arab, and particularly Palestinian, peoples.<sup>3</sup> His own consciousness of being an 'Oriental' goes back to his youth in Palestine and Egypt, to the heady atmosphere of post-war independence, of Arab nationalism and the experience of Nasserism (Said, 1985a:15-6). Since the 1960s, the Middle East region has undergone the upheavals of war and revolution, becoming a focus of both regional and global conflicts. These can be linked both to the processes of decolonisation and construction of post-colonial societies,<sup>4</sup> and to the Cold War. During the 1970s, the Oil Crisis, the Iranian Revolution and the resurgence of 'Islamic fundamentalism' enhanced in the West a sense of Islamic societies as different and threatening. As Turner notes, it was in this atmosphere of regional and global conflict that the debate about Orientalism arose (Turner, 1989:630).

Said's writings range from literature and philology across anthropology and philosophy to history and politics. They exhibit a fusion of intellectual interests and political commentary drawn from his own experiences and the influence of radical developments in the intellectual environment. The post-war era saw the development of, for instance, feminism, neo-Marxism, social protest movements,

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<sup>3</sup> His personal involvement in the politics of the region include his membership of the Palestinian National Council (1977-1991) on which he sat as an independent intellectual, and consultant to the UN International Conference on the Question of Palestine (1983). Said has never been a member of any political party. For discussion of his role in the P.N.C. see Hovsepian(1992).

<sup>4</sup> Although in Palestine's case, Said would no doubt argue that the most pressing feature of post-war politics was the imposition of a new form of colonialism by Israel.

and post-structuralism. Said's work demonstrates the influence of these discursive developments, but has also itself been a major stimulus to the development of critical thinking. As Radhakrishnan(1994) notes, Said's work reflects complexity: he cannot be regarded as simply a Palestinian activist or conversely as a Professor of Literature; his agenda is more complex. Similarly, he is not simply a Foucauldian nor a Gramscian, but draws on an intricate variety of influences. For instance, Said's sense of geography is influenced by his own experience of displacement, and the inadequacy of conventional geography to express the experiences of the dispossessed; but is also influenced by the 'spatialisation of cultural and social theory' found in Gramsci and Foucault.<sup>5</sup>

A second instance of the fusion of influences is Said's interest in concepts of power; this is influenced both by his experience of Middle East politics, and by Michel Foucault (Said, 1978:3). He shares with Foucault interests in the links between power, knowledge and representation; in discourse; and in the impact of location on scholars and authors. Like Foucault, Said highlights the political character of knowledge (Thomas, 1994:24). Foucault's method 'dethrones' the primacy of the 'knowing subject', so central to much of Western thinking, arguing instead that knowledge of the object is always contextual (Dalby, 1980:492).<sup>6</sup> Similarly Said argues that the individual author is influenced and constrained by the discourses through which knowledge is received and expressed (Said, 1978:92-4; 1983; Clifford, 1988). Said is also influenced by Foucault, and indirectly Nietzsche, in the genealogical methodology he employs in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* (Clifford, 1988:266). Both works discuss the degree to which individual texts are products of an established discourse within influential social and political contexts.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On the map of modernity, notes Gregory, 'territory connotes what Foucault would call a juridipolitical field'. It is no accident, he suggests, that Said's writing about Palestine is shot through with references to, and images of, partition and enclosure that mimic Foucault (Gregory, 1995:452). Gramsci, argues Gregory, is also a major, but spectral influence on *Culture and Imperialism* in which Said repeatedly refers to the importance of spatial concepts and mapping to empire (1995:467).

<sup>6</sup> For a critical discussion of Said's Foucauldian method, see for example, Garre(1995:315).

<sup>7</sup> *Orientalism* traces the discourse of Orientalism through a variety of texts, placing these texts within historical and intellectual contexts; similarly, *Culture and Imperialism* seeks to demonstrate

Said's ideas of power are also influenced by Gramsci's concept of hegemony.<sup>8</sup> Hegemony is an important dimension of the West's power for Said, providing consensus on Western superiority within the West, and a facility for maintaining that power overseas in the post-colonial era. Like Huntington, Said challenges assumptions that Western cultural hegemony is a natural evolution of a universal culture, suggesting instead that it projects Western values, ideas and culture under the guise of universalism.

Yet although Said challenges Western cultural hegemony, he also rejects suggestions that an authentic non-Western culture can be posited in contrast to the negative representations produced by Western culture. His rejection of essentialism and the construction of rigid cultural categories draws deeply on liberal humanist concepts which form an important part of European thought. As Clifford notes, although a radical critic of Western cultural traditions, Said derives most of his standards from these traditions (Clifford, 1988:275). Said's humanist ideas distinguish him from Foucault and are problematic for some critics who view humanism as an intellectual and ethical dimension of Western colonialism (Clifford, 1988; Young, 1990).<sup>9</sup> Despite this, Said clearly associates himself with a belief in 'a common humanity',<sup>10</sup> maintaining a sense of a shared human reality which is complex and heterodox, but often obscured by essentialised and monolithic representations of cultures (Said, 1993:377; 1995:3). Said's work seeks to traverse cultural barriers, such as those between Orient and West, and dismantle, not reinforce, cultural monoliths and essentialisations. For Said, cultures are interdependent interactive, and non-exclusive, 'Beethoven' he notes, 'belongs as

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the embeddedness of the power structures of imperialism in the culture and the subconsciousness of the West.

<sup>8</sup> Gramsci's concept of hegemony is interpreted by Said as the operation of culture within civil society where the influence of ideas, of institutions and of persons works through consent rather than domination (Said, 1978:6-7).

<sup>9</sup> Young(1990) notes that for some, humanism actually masks the assimilation of the human self with European values. Humanism constructs boundaries based on the marginalisation or creation of the 'non-human', the savage, the barbarian - implicitly, those who had not been assimilated by the West. Young points to the integral role of European colonialism in the construction of the identity of the West and as the universal prototype for other human societies.

<sup>10</sup> A belief for which, Rogers notes, he provides no philosophical defence (Rogers, 1992:519).



much to the West Indians as he does to Germans, since his music is now part of the human heritage' (Said, 1993:xxviii).

Said's humanism is also evident in his commitment to the goals of emancipation and enlightenment, goals which he stresses remain a high priority to the peoples of the developing world (1994b).<sup>11</sup> Said wants to sustain the 'liberating energies released by the great decolonising resistance movements, and the mass uprisings of the 1980s' (1993:401). He fears these liberating energies could be strangled by narrow or chauvinist forms of nationalism, or 'nativism', which themselves reinforce the divisions imposed by nineteenth century Western imperialism. For Said, whilst the development of national consciousness is the necessary first stage of anti-imperialism, true liberation requires movement onward from national to social consciousness (1993:276, 323),<sup>12</sup> rejecting nationalist separatism and triumphalism in favour of seeking a community among cultures and peoples: 'This community is the real human liberation portended by the resistance to imperialism' (1993:262). Without such a transformation, national consciousness can produce fundamentalism and despotism rather than liberation (1993:277, 323). Thus, although Said draws on the influence of critics of the Enlightenment, he himself retains a commitment to humanism, enlightenment, and emancipation.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> He notes that while in the West, intellectual currents such as post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-Marxism are concerned with the 'end of modernity', in the Arab and Islamic world, many 'are still concerned with *modernity* itself, still far from exhausted, still a major challenge in a culture dominated by *turath* (heritage) and orthodoxy (Said, 1993:399). He suggests that the secular intellectual has an important role in continuing to promote these aims (1994b).

<sup>12</sup> See his discussion of Fanon (1993:323-6). Note also his obvious admiration for the scholars Curtius and Auerbach: 'These thinkers took nationalism to be a transitory, finally secondary matter: what mattered far more was the concert of peoples and spirits that transcended the shabby political realm of bureaucracy, armies, customs barriers, and xenophobia.' Out of this 'catholic' and European tradition emerged the transnational study of comparative literature, Said's own chosen field (Said, 1993:51).

<sup>13</sup> For instance, he draws on one of the great humanist scholars, Vico, in his discussion of history as made by man. Said's humanism has been criticised or queried by some such as Young (1990) who point to the associations between humanism and European imperialism, and Clifford who suggests that Said is himself presenting a grand totality in the form of a presumed human culture (Clifford, 1988:274). In contrast, Rogers criticises Young for finding Said 'guilty by association' with hegemonic Western culture. Humanism, he suggests, has always been an ambiguous discourse on human rights (Rogers, 1992:520). For others, it is yet a further demonstration of his complexity. Thomas' comments suggest that Said's humanism reminds us of the variety within all cultures rather than implying a uniform universalism (Thomas, 1994:24).

Said's references to the common heritage of humanity imply a sense of an evolutionary human culture in which he draws on the influence of the British critic, Raymond Williams (Said, 1993:xxxix; 1990). Williams, a 'cultural materialist', was one of the main inspirations for *Orientalism* (Gregory, 1995:466).<sup>14</sup> Said draws on Williams' notion of 'structures of feeling' in developing his own sense of the connections between the literature and art of the West and its broader imperial culture in *Culture and Imperialism*. Said engages the influence of both Williams and Foucault in exploring the relationship between the West and those over whom it exercised empire and hegemony. However, he criticised both for their Eurocentrism (Said, 1988:9; 1990). Said's own work exceeds that of these influential figures in its geographic and cultural scope.<sup>15</sup>

As noted above, Said, displaced from Palestine, came of age during the era of decolonisation. In some respects, his work is an aspect of this broader process of dismantling empire. One of the consequences of imperialism is to deprive the colonised of the right to represent themselves. His work on Palestine is in part an effort to return to the Palestinian people the right to tell their own story and represent themselves (Said, 1985b; Arac, 1994:13). Said was influenced by earlier post-colonial writers such as Anwer Abdel Malek, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon and particularly the *Subaltern Studies* group who revolutionised Indian historiography (Said, 1985a; 1995).<sup>16</sup> The post-colonial studies movement, which they and he helped to generate, challenges Western history and scholarship:

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<sup>14</sup> Williams had a strong interest in the links between culture and society. 'Culture', he argued in 1958, 'is ordinary'. Every society has its own purposes, and meanings which are expressed in institutions, arts and learning. However, he also believed in the existence of a general human culture which gradually evolved, although not necessarily towards any point of perfection (Williams, 1958; 1961:43, 53). As a literary critic, Williams 'rooted' his observation of literature in the life of the broader society in which the artist lived, connecting literary texts and 'the lived life of knowable social groups' (Said, 1990:82). See Young (1990:88-9) for a brief discussion of cultural materialism.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford argues that Said goes beyond Foucault in seeking to extend his concept of discourse into the area of cultural constructions, looking at ways in which the cultural order is defined externally with respect to the exotic 'other', thus expanding on Foucault's ethnocentric focus on European thought (Clifford, 1988:264-5).

<sup>16</sup> In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said identifies three topics emerging from 'decolonising cultural resistance': the insistence on the right to see the community's history as a whole; the idea of resistance being an alternative way of conceiving human history rather than merely a reaction to imperialism; and the pull away from nationalism to a more integrative view of human community and liberation (1993:259-61). He also discusses the evolution within post-colonial writing from the earlier writers who felt comfortable in identifying with the Western cultural traditions and the

Not only is the European presence in Africa, Latin America, and Asia routinely interrogated to disclose the construction and constriction of other subjects, empire and colonialism are increasingly seen placed at the very center of Europe's constitution. (Prakash, 1995:205)

Prakash notes that post-colonialism is part of a discursive shift which casts doubts on the idea of subjects and origins authorised by Western humanism, and highlights the hierarchical identities and knowledge instituted by binary oppositions. In this respect, there is convergence between post-colonial criticism and post-structuralist interrogation of the universal subject (Prakash, 1995:205). However, as noted above, Said goes only so far along the post-structuralist road. His work demonstrates a certain disillusionment with abstractness of some post-modernist writing (Said, 1993; 1994b). For him, post-colonialism is crucially distinguished from post-modernism by its continued commitment to the goals of emancipation and enlightenment (Said, 1995:6), goals, he argues, that the West, has failed to live up to because of its imperialism. Said wants to turn the 'artificial sentinel' of Western humanism into real humanism, a consciousness of social and political needs which is colour blind and has no regard for the divisions constructed by imperialism (Said, 1993:324-5). As Driver observes, Said is post-modern in the sense that he is critical of 'the worldly role of the humanities'. However, 'his insistence on the need to make political choices provides a powerful counterpoint to current drifts within post-modernist writing' (Driver, 1992:37).

The blend of Said's personal experiences and intellectual influences have contributed to a perspective which is fervently anti-imperialist, but simultaneously committed to the humanist goals of enlightenment and emancipation. Said therefore straddles the boundaries between West and non-West, modern and post-modern. In many respects, this reflects the way his life and work straddles boundaries, of faiths, of cultures, of locations, of disciplines. Most of his life has been spent in the United States, the heartland of 'the West', a multicultural society founded on immigrant communities. Said's main standards and intellectual

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methodology of grand narratives of emancipation, to the later post-independence writers who focus more on analysing and deconstructing the rhetoric, ideas and symbols of imperial power rather than on its history (1993:288-316).

influences are drawn from European literature and philosophy (Clifford, 1988:275).<sup>17</sup> Yet in many respects, he still writes as an exile. He is both inside and outside 'the West', representing and presenting perspectives frequently not associated with the West. Consequently, Said brings a healthy, but for many disturbing, complexity to the West.

### *Civilisations, Cultures and Interaction*

Said's conception of civilisations is pluralist, but underwritten by a belief in a broader community of humanity. Although he does not define civilisations explicitly, and speaks more often of culture than civilisation, his work implies a deep concern for the course of civilisational interaction, and for West/non-West interaction in particular. His understanding of the significance of culture is linked to his understanding of the role which representations play in society:

We live of course in a world not only of commodities but also of representations, and representations - their production, circulation, history, and interpretation - are the very element of culture. (Said, 1993:66)

Like Williams, his analysis focuses methodologically on 'documentary' culture, that is literature and the arts. Williams stressed the interconnectedness of all categories of culture; documentary, social, ideal (Williams, 1961:41-7). Similarly, Said relates literature and the arts to the broader social and political trends of the society. This has produced the criticism that his work focuses too narrowly on 'high culture' (Young, 1990:133).<sup>18</sup> However, he seeks to justify this focus by demonstrating not only the connectedness between culture and its political and social context, but also the function which 'high culture' fulfils in reinforcing the 'structures of feeling' underlying political and social structures.<sup>19</sup> Culture is for

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<sup>17</sup> At the same time, we should note that Said rejects suggestions that resistance to imperialism was led exclusively by Western ideas of freedom. What he seeks to highlight here is the importance of what he calls 'reserves' in Indian and Arab culture which had always resisted Western colonial rule (1993:240).

<sup>18</sup> Clifford criticises Said for failing to present a developed theory of culture as a differentiating ensemble rather than simply hegemonic and disciplinary (Clifford, 1988:263).

<sup>19</sup> This is particularly evident in *Culture and Imperialism*.

Said a source of identity, a 'theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another' (Said, 1993:xiii-iv).

Said does not view cultures as spontaneous, but as social constructions (1993:408). Furthermore, they are selective constructions produced by particular representations of self and other.<sup>20</sup> The tendency to think of cultures as homogeneous, he suggests, obscures this selectivity. Furthermore, erroneous acceptance of particular representations or traditions as authentic often marginalises others.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Said argues:

No one today is purely *one* thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. (1993:407)

In contrast, he sees cultures as 'hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic' (1993:xxix):

Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds, among different cultures. This is a universal norm. (1993:261-2)

Therefore, although Said's view of cultures and civilisations is a pluralist one, his pluralism is less segregated than Huntington's or Spengler's.

Said's conception of cultures is also dynamic in that he perceives them as constantly in the process of reconstitution, influenced by contemporary needs. As he notes, the development and maintenance of culture requires the existence of an alter ego:

The construction of identity ... involves establishing opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous

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<sup>20</sup> Here, Said draws on the work of Martin Bernal(1987) and Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger(1983) on the 'invention' of traditions and history, either through writing out certain aspects of history which do not fit the authorised history, or through projecting the image or power of certain traditions backwards in order to enhance their legitimacy (Said, 1993:16).

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, his discussion of the authorising and reproduction of the American identity in foreign policy (Said, 1993:393).

interpretation and reinterpretation of their differences from 'us'.  
Each age and society recreates its 'others'. (1995:3)<sup>22</sup>

James Carrier describes this as a contextual or dialectical definition: 'To tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else'.<sup>23</sup> There is an inherent danger that the relativity of this perception of difference can be lost from view; the model becoming detached from the dialectic, distinguishing characteristics becoming defining characteristics, and the sense of difference becoming absolute in the light of essentialised representations of the other (Carrier, 1992).<sup>24</sup> Said's conception of the West critically investigates the employment of dialectical definition. The West is conceived of as generating its self-image in antithesis to colonial peoples. In *Orientalism*, for instance, he notes that shared experiences of history, politics, economics are qualified by the belief that 'Islam is Islam and the Orient is the Orient' (1978:107). All emotions and experiences 'are necessarily subordinate to the sheer, unadorned, and persistent fact of being an Arab' (1978:230).

His criticism of practices of differentiation focuses not on the formation of cultural identities, but on the tendencies to venerate our own cultures at the expense of respect for others (1993:21) and to essentialise cultural identities:

...identity does not necessarily imply an ontologically given and eternally determined stability, or uniqueness, or irreducible character, or privileged status as something total and complete in and of itself. (1993:382)

Clifford notes in Said, as in Foucault, 'a restless suspicion of totality' (Clifford, 1988:273; Foucault, 1976).<sup>25</sup> This underlies Said's discomfort with procedures

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<sup>22</sup> This leads Said to comment that the role of the cultural intellectual is not to accept the politics of identity as given, but 'to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom and with what components' (1993:380).

<sup>23</sup> Here Carrier quotes Kenneth Burke (Carrier, 1995:2).

<sup>24</sup> Carrier has noted that twin and opposing characterisations of the modern West and societies in other times and places are a common feature of Western anthropology and sociology, being found in the work of Marx, Durkheim and Levi-Strauss, to cite a few examples (1995:3). In the context of the essentialisation of cultural models, this has produced an image of the West as characterised by, for instance, individualism, rationality, organic solidarity, and progressivism (Carrier, 1995:4-5).

<sup>25</sup> He argues that the human experience is 'finely textured, dense and accessible', but accessible through studying intertwined histories and overlapping spaces rather than through grand systems or ahistorical theories which tend to freeze highly contested orthodox or institutional versions of history into official identities. See Said(1993:377).

which create and enclose entities such as culture or 'the Orient'. As Clifford notes, Said suggests that

...the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically 'different' inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture or racial essence proper to that geographical space is equally a highly debatable idea. (quoted in Clifford, 1988:274)

Clifford, however, also criticises Said for himself resorting to 'alternate totalities' in positing humanist cosmopolitan essences and human common denominators (Clifford, 1988:274). This suggests a certain tension within Said's position. There is resentment at Western cultural hegemony which rejects the plurality of equal cultures. Simultaneously, there is resistance to cultural reductionism which produces stereotypical images of the other. Said wants to emancipate the non-West from the stereotypes of weakness and inferiority which facilitated Western control and power of colonised peoples.<sup>26</sup> However, he does not want to emancipate the popular imagination from Western cultural imperialism only to deliver it into the 'tyranny' of an equally essentialised sense of homogeneous and authentic traditions.

In rejecting Western cultural hegemony presented in the West's self-representations, Said challenges assumptions that civilisational interaction occurs within a framework of an authentic civilisational hierarchy, or necessarily leads to convergence with the most powerful culture. However, his rejection of cultural essentialism also challenges assumptions that civilisations interact in a framework of segregated and hostile communities. He directly challenges the assumption that difference means hostility. His aim in *Orientalism*, he has argued,

...was not so much to dissipate difference itself ... but to challenge the notion that difference implies hostility, a frozen reified set of opposed essences, and a whole adversarial knowledge built out of those things. (1995:6)

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<sup>26</sup> As Turner(1989:629) and Carrier(1992) note, differentiation and even essentialism are practices of identity formation which are not necessarily unique to modern Western society: 'After all, to put a name on something is to identify its key characteristics and therefore essentialise it' (Carrier, 1992:207). Carrier also demonstrates that the West has also been subject to essentialisation, both by itself and by non-Westerners seeking to define their own identity in antithesis to the West. See, for instance, Said's discussion of America's official image of itself (1993:380-1).

He appears to seek a middle way between perceiving civilisational interaction as hierarchical or convergent, as suggested by Fukuyama, and as segregated and hostile, as suggested by Huntington. This presents two important challenges which Said articulates in *Orientalism*. Firstly, how does one *represent* other cultures? (1978:325). Secondly:

Can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanely? (1978:45)<sup>27</sup>

### ***The Boundaries of Said's West***

Said's work accentuates the existence of contending perspectives on the framework of cultural world order. It also suggests that the texts which set out these perspectives not only reflect but help to constitute these frameworks. His work critically reflects on how the West perceived itself projected through its images of the non-West. The self-image which he describes encompasses a strongly hierarchical sense of cultural world order which privileges the West's position, viewing the non-Western civilisations as dead or decaying and therefore in need of restoration by the West, the prime representative of modern civilisation (1978:7, 87, 99). This is an image which Said implicitly critiques in his own more egalitarian conception of cultural world order and the West.

### ***Territory***

Said's conception of the West is strongly influenced by his perception of territory as land imbued with political meaning. His writings demonstrate a strong interest in, and radical sense of, geography and space which he calls 'imaginary geography'. This challenges concepts of geography as a science which is neutral and apolitical and accentuates its relationship to knowledge and power. Geography and boundaries are understood not simply as empirical givens but through the meaning attributed to a particular space or location (1978:54-5; 1994b:21). This

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<sup>27</sup> Said's question is really how do we represent other cultures fairly, respectfully and equally. In a 1994 article, Said suggest that the best course is that of open-mindedness and enlightenment, to achieve 'small emancipations through learning' (1994b:24).



meaning may be influenced by the exercise of power.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, in Said's work, inscriptions of territory become overtly associated with the distribution of power.

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A strong sense of spatiality is particularly noticeable in *Culture and Imperialism* which includes frequent references to locating, mapping and the utility of space, particularly the space of empire.<sup>30</sup> Imperialism is described as 'an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control' (1993:271). The geographical underpinnings of empire underlie its social space: 'The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about' (Said, 1993:93).

Said's conception of the territory of the West is shaped by his interest in the political and intellectual dimensions of space. We receive a stronger sense of the meaning of locations than of the boundaries of a specific territory. The West is primarily constituted by imperial Europe and the United States; his analyses focus on the texts and experiences of Britain, France and the United States, although his territorial conception of the West is not limited to them. However, these countries play for him a leading role in generating material, ideas and representations of the Orient (1978:17).<sup>31</sup> Their ideas are discussed as the ideas of the West. Said's map

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<sup>28</sup> For instance, for Said, the land which was once his home has become an alien place. The Palestine into which he was born effectively no longer exists, it is now the territory of Israel. This was a change effected not by cultural evolution, but by the exercise of power. See Said's essay 'Return to Palestine-Israel' in Said(1994a). In this, he describes a profound sense of alienation and displacement both personally - for instance, in seeing his former home occupied by another community - and at the level of the Palestinian people living in Israel and the West Bank or abroad. As Rogers(1992:520-1) notes, Said writes from a sense of displacement, of homelessness.

<sup>29</sup> As a displaced Palestinian, Said's own life experiences are reflected in a sense of geography which is problematised, denaturalised. In *After the Last Sky*, for instance, Said is described as arguing for 'a space for representation that deploys hybrid, broken, fragmentary forms to reinscribe a Palestinian presence on the map' (Gregory, 1995:451; Said, 1985b).

<sup>30</sup> For instance, in discussing Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Said comments on the existence of 'a hierarchy of spaces by which the metropolitan centre and, gradually, the metropolitan economy are seen as dependent upon an overseas system of territorial control, economic exploitation, and a socio-cultural vision; without these stability and prosperity at home - 'home' being a word with extremely potent resonances - would not be possible' (1993:69).

<sup>31</sup> This is due, in part, to the depth and extent of their involvement in the Middle East region. In *Orientalism*, Said was criticised by other scholars for his failure to include the works of scholars from other European countries, particularly Germany, and from Russia (Kerr, 1980; Lewis, 1993). However, Said has discounted such criticisms as trivial (Said, 1985b:14). German scholars, he argues, lacked the sustained national interests in the Orient which Said identifies in Anglo-French

of the West in this respect is as much an intellectual as a territorial map. Ideas imbue space with meaning and support the construction of boundaries between territories.

The non-West plays an important role in mapping the location of the West in Said's analyses. In *Orientalism*, the East helps to provide the location of the West with meaning. His work traces associations which gathered around the notion of the Orient in the literature of classical Greece, identifying a bold sense of division between East and West in the work of authors such as Aeschylus and even Homer. He selects texts which present Asia as defeated and distant in contrast to a powerful and articulate West, or an Orient which threatens the values and stability of the West (1978:55-7). These are motifs of the Orient which Said points to throughout his work. They provide the geographical location of the West with a meaning and a sense of difference, which are confirmed through their reiteration (Said, 1978:201). The Orient is a location, he suggests, which was always familiar, but different to the West; always *like* the West in some respects, but consistently represented as lying outside the boundaries of that community (1978:67). In this respect, the Orient is perceived as marking a significant boundary of the West.

As in all other authors discussed, there emerges from both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* a sense that the geographic expansion of the West was facilitated by Western technology, reducing the distance between the West and other civilisations. However, Said does not suggest that this has brought about convergence between East and West. Rather it is perceived as accentuating the sense of separation between European and non-European peoples. For instance, he describes the Suez Canal (1869) as 'dragging' the Orient into the West's geographical ambit and making it part of one world' (1978:92). The Orient is brought into the West's geographical sphere, but not as an equal. Rather it was 'penetrated, worked over, taken hold of', formerly alien space was domesticated into colonial space (Said, 1978:211; Driver, 1992:30).

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and later American authors. Although he acknowledges their contributions to scholarship, he argues they worked within a *Weltanschauung* established by French and British predecessors (Said/Lewis, 1982).

## *Religion*

Said has clearly and repeatedly identified himself as a secular scholar. However, this does not lead him to underestimate the powerful role which religion plays as a marker of identity. However, unlike Spengler, he focuses on religion as an agent of differentiation rather than as an institution which bestowed specific values or qualities on Western civilisation. The central axis of difference which defines the West for him is that between Christianity and Islam. His remarks reveal more about how the history and tradition of this conflict helped define the West than about the moral and institutional characteristics which Christianity contributed to the West.

Like Wight and Huntington, Said's account of the West's attitude towards Islam is one steeped in a sense of confrontation rather than coexistence. It acknowledges the threat felt by Christian Europe as Islam expanded through Asia, North Africa and Europe between the seventh and seventeenth centuries:

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolise terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. ... [I]n time, European civilisation incorporated that peril and its lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into the fabric of life. (1978:59)

This suggests that on the one hand, the encounter with Islam was internalised by the West, coming to represent a broad sense of disruption and danger. However, Said also suggests that the West strengthened its self-image by diminutive representations of Islam; that the West 'domesticated' Islam through its representations of that faith. For example, Islam was often represented by Orientalist scholarship as a form of heresy, the prophet Mohammed as an imposter (1978:62-6).<sup>32</sup> This suggests that the West's sense of its own identity was enhanced by its perception of Oriental people as both threatening and inferior in the religious context. Assumptions of threat and degeneracy innate in Islam are prominent in Said's discussion of the West's self-image, the proximity of Islam and Christianity, geographically and spiritually, perceived to produce, not deeper

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<sup>32</sup> Said notes that until the eighteenth century, scholars of the Orient were primarily biblical scholars (1978:51). For him, these biblical origins left a lasting imprint on this perspective, privileging the West as a Christian community whilst Islam remains perceived as a form of cultural effrontery (1978:260).

knowledge or understanding of each other, but essentialised images which reinforced the sense of a distinct Western identity.<sup>33</sup>

Whilst acknowledging that Enlightenment though 'loosened the biblical framework', Said argues that secular modes of thought in the West redeployed assumptions of difference and superiority inherited from the religious era (Said, 1978:121). He argues that the scientific thinking of Europe's secular age which displaced religion continued to project representations of the Orient which further legitimised and empowered the West as rational and advanced. Philology, and later anthropology, archaeology, and biology served to decipher, to reveal and to reconstruct the ancient cultures of the Orient (1978:135-46). In a sense, therefore, Said suggests secular science itself became creator or recreator of the Orient, perpetuating the perception of a subservient Orient and a superior West. The sense of differentiation founded on religious identities thus appears to form a significant boundary to Said's West.

### *Race*

A strong sense of racial distinction permeates Said's conception of the West. The superiority of the white or Aryan races becomes an implicit and often explicit feature of the imperialist and Orientalist perspectives he describes. A sense of racial difference is presented as part of the common intellectual equipment employed by Western scholars and administrators. The sense of race forming a boundary of the West is most pronounced in Said's discussion of nineteenth century texts where he identifies assumptions about racial hierarchy in a wide range of fields such as anthropology, legal history, utilitarianism, and idealism.<sup>34</sup> There was, he notes, no significant dissent from the theories of the inferiority of black races, and the superiority and unchallenged authority of whites (1993:121). Said links the tendency to think in collective generalisations with contemporary ideas of

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<sup>33</sup> His work suggests that, over the centuries, it was not knowledge but ignorance of Islam and its beliefs that were systematically refined by Orientalists (Said, 1978:62).

<sup>34</sup> For instance, in the earlier part of the century, Said identifies philology as one of the core disciplines through which the West came to study the Orient. An implicit racism underlay this discipline, he argues, with language and race seemingly inextricably tied (1978:99). Said notes that with the rise of ethnography in nineteenth century Europe, there is a codification of difference and various evolutionary schemes going from primitive to civilised (1993:130).

racial theory to show how linguistic and racial theories became easily equated with biologically-based notions of inequality, and a sense of determinism. This suggested unbreachable barriers between different races, nations and civilisations. Notions of difference, therefore, overwhelmed common and plural human realities (1978:233).<sup>35</sup> In this context, race becomes a primary marker of difference, of inferiority, or to paraphrase Frantz Fanon, race became an ineradicable sign of negative difference in colonial discourses (Cited in Bhabha, 1983:28). For instance, Said suggests that the West, examining the world through the Orientalist prism, equates the Arab with the weaker or more alien elements of contemporary society, the poor, women, the insane (1978:207). The Arab is deprived of equal recognition as a fellow human being, and is consistently dehumanised, considered first and foremost to be an Arab and only secondly as a human being.

Said represents the racial boundary as not only delineating the West, but also serving to rationalise its imperialism. Hence, his work suggests that the West's perception of the weaker Orient, as transmitted through the lens of Orientalism, justified the white race's expansion into the 'uncivilised' world (1978:207). This is illustrated in Said's references to Kipling's vision of the white man's superiority, endowing him with a duty to 'clean up' the world (1978:226; 1993:162, 182), or Ruskin's of England's right *and duty* to bring governance to wider world, based on the purity of its race (1993:123-5). As with territory, it is the meanings and assumptions with which skin colour is linked which are significant. These make race a boundary of the West and help to justify its domination of the non-West.

Said's perception of the West as defined by race is not lessened by the rise to prominence of the United States in the twentieth century, whose foreign policy he regards as informed by racial prejudice towards Asia and towards Arab peoples (1993:350). Racist caricatures, he suggests, continue to inform American perceptions of Arabs and Islam (1993:364).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In addition, ideas such as second order Darwinism, he notes, seemed to 'accentuate the 'scientific' validity of the division of races into the advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African' (Said, 1978:206).

<sup>36</sup> The multi-racial composition of American society does not appear to mitigate this tendency towards racial stereotyping in Said's judgement. His analysis suggests instead that the official sense of American identity does not reflect the diversity of its immigrant backgrounds, but selectively

## *Power*

The boundaries of the West in Said's work are crucially influenced by his complex concept of power which entails both material dimensions, and ideas and representations. He emphasises the importance of discourse as a form of power through which social reality is constituted. Knowledge and representations not only justify power, they underlie and shape the structures and institutions of power (1978:12). Although it is informed by consciousness of the West's political, economic and military capacity, Said's discussion of the West's power focuses primarily on how the deployment of knowledge underwrites and reinforces its material power. Imperialism is the discourse which frames the structures and institutions of Western power for him.

As with all preceding authors, underlying Said's references to the West is an awareness of the extensive and unprecedented physical power which Europe and the United States exercised in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is a strong sense of the West relentlessly accumulating and exercising power through the establishment of interests in new regions, and through the accumulation of peoples in addition to territories (1978:123): 'No other associated set of colonies in history was as large, none so totally dominated, none so unequal in power to the Western metropolis' (1993:6). This produced an imbalance of power which, for Said, continues in the twentieth century. The Gulf War, for instance, illustrated for him the continued potency of the ideas that great powers had the right to safeguard distant interests to the point of military intervention and, 'that lesser powers were also lesser people, with lesser rights, morals and claims' (1993:41). Like Bull and Watson, Said suggests that the imbalance of power supported a sense of civilisational hierarchy, with the West at its peak.

Said's analysis is premised on the view that differentiation and deployment of images of other cultures is an exercise of power. Therefore, he depicts the imbalance of power between West and non-West during the era of imperialism reflected in the construction and deployment of images of colonised people

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draws on a simpler, self-image based on the foundation of the pioneering society rather than its multicultural heritage (Said, 1993:381).

(1993:127). Central to this analysis is a consciousness of the link between power and the way in which knowledge is *produced*. For Said, writes Clifford, pure scholarship does not exist: 'Knowledge in his view is inextricably tied to power' (Clifford, 1988:256).<sup>37</sup>

In both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said traces links between knowledge and power in a wide assortment of literature and art, identifying undertones of imperialist ideology which are continued in the popular culture of the later twentieth century West.<sup>38</sup> In these texts, Said identifies 'structures of attitudes and reference' which encompass views such as racial superiority and Western political authority which support and consolidate the West's material power at the cultural level (1993:134).<sup>39</sup> In the contemporary context, he identifies a correspondence between the 'imperialist' perspectives of influential media-managers and official American policy on the non-Western world.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, for

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<sup>37</sup> As noted above, politics and knowledge are viewed as linked given that knowledge is always formed in a political context. Pursuing this theme in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that culture is subject to the political context in which it is produced. Furthermore, scholarship and art contribute to the reproduction and authority of this context, and are therefore themselves an aspect of power, not merely a reflection of it. Fundamental to this argument is the belief that there is no such thing as truly objective scholarship since all authors are subject to the influences of the discourse in which they work. For instance, in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said discusses the 'structure of feeling' within literature which supported and consolidated the expansion of overseas empire. The novel, he argues, is an artefact of bourgeois society which fortified, and was fortified by, imperialism (1993:84).

<sup>38</sup> For some commentators, Said's work is too political, crossing the boundary between scholarship and polemic. Said rejected characterisations of his work as polemical, arguing he sought to dismantle such boundaries by demonstrating all scholarship is shaped to some degree by the political and social context in which it is formed. See, for instance, Kerr(1980) and Lewis(1993) for criticism of *Orientalism* as political and anti-Western. Said and Lewis subsequently engaged in fairly heated exchanges, with Said castigating scholars such as Lewis and Daniel Pipes for the political character of their analysis of the Middle East which, Said argues, exemplifies modern Orientalism (Said /Lewis, 1982; Said, 1985b).

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, his discussion of the way in which Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* confirms a sense of European, white authority in the way in which he narrates and represents the strangeness of Africa (Said, 1993:198-200). Africa's meaning and history is constituted principally with reference to Europe.

<sup>40</sup> See Said's comments on correspondence between the American electronic media and government policy, and the significance of the 'sound-bite' form of presentation of self and other cultures in this context (1993:391).

Said, scholarship and art contribute to the discourse of imperial power which is a defining element of the West.<sup>41</sup>

Within these discourses, Said identifies the hegemony of ideas which assert European superiority. It could be argued that all cultures represent others in a way that empowers themselves. What is distinctive about Said's West is its capacity to successfully project its representations and to have these accepted by other peoples (1993:120). Like Huntington, Said associates the West's cultural hegemony with the scale, scope and longevity of Western material power (1993:267). However, Said's treatment of the West's cultural hegemony interweaves culture more deeply into the substance of the West's power than Huntington, for whom cultural power is more a manifestation of material capacity. Both, however, agree that the West's cultural hegemony is Euro-centric, Said noting that at the heart of European culture during the era of imperial expansion lay 'an undeterred and unrelenting Euro-centrism' (1993:267). For him, this is manifested in the West placing itself at the centre of the world, as the source of all significant action. Overseas territories were perceived as 'outlying estates' to the Western metropole, not communities with an independent existence. Consequently, Said sees the West according the non-West no significant meaning outside its relationship to the West. Even in many liberal Western works, as he argues,

...the source of the world's significant action and life is the West. ...  
In this view, the outlying regions of the world have no life, history,  
or culture to speak of, no independence or integrity worth  
representing without the West. (1993:xxi)<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Not all critics have accepted Said's linkages of scholarship and power, a linkage which challenges the sense of objectivity and therefore the integrity of scholarship. In some cases, this has led to efforts to debunk Said's equations. One of the most common criticisms of *Orientalism* was of the linkages which Said made between power and knowledge. For many, this insulted the sense of academic integrity and freedom, and misrepresented the field of Oriental studies as a lackey of imperialism (Kerr, 1980; Butterworth, 1980; Duncanson, 1980; Lewis, 1993). Garre also argues that Said, although usefully establishing the close relationship between Orientalism and imperialism, allows for no other possibilities (Garre, 1995:323). As Prakesh notes, the division between Said and his critics on these issues highlights a fundamental difference in approach: Said's conception of Orientalism as a discourse, she argues, 'crosses authoritative writing with political authority; the two are mutually enabling rather than oppositional' (Prakash, 1995:203).

<sup>42</sup> Said's illustrations range from John Stuart Mill (Said, 1993:108) to André Gide, from Graham Greene to Oliver Stone (1993:xxi). See also his discussion of Camus in which he highlights the absence of a sense of Algeria as a society which has a history, an identity outside its relationship with France (1993:204-24).



Fundamental to this process is the sense that the West had the ability and the right to articulate the non-West, which could not speak for itself (1978:121,140); or in Marx's words, '*Sie können sich nicht vertreten sie müssen vertreten werden*' (1978:21).

As Ernest Wilson comments, '[d]omination like liberation tends to be a total phenomenon' which touches upon all aspects of society (Wilson, 1981:59). For Said, the West's power was also expressed in its ability to reach into all aspects of the lives of the dominated society to catalogue, enumerate and define its subjects.<sup>43</sup> These textual and schematic attitudes represent for him a process through which the West made the Orient available to it, and in doing this, to domesticate the mystery and hostility of the East and Islam (1978:87). The process of knowing the Orient was a part of learning to control the Orient (Schaar, 1979:69).<sup>44</sup> For example, Said discusses the massive *Description de l'Égypte* (1809-1828), published as part of Napoleon's project to dominate Egypt. Part of this project, argues Said, was to render Egypt completely open, 'to make it totally accessible to European scrutiny' (1978:83). Furthermore, its purposes were '[t]o restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct [for its own benefit] the Orient in the ways of the modern West' through the formulation and systemisation of knowledge about the region. This would, 'formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of its place in memory, its importance to imperial strategy, and its 'natural' role as an appendage of Europe'. In describing it in modern Occidental terms, the Orient is lifted from the 'realms of silent obscurity' and brought into the 'clarity of modern European science' (1978:86). Processes of representation are therefore shown by Said as empowering the West, first in allowing it to articulate the East in the context of a hierarchy of cultures dominated by the West. Secondly, they served to highlight the 'sobriety

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<sup>43</sup> Said suggests that this process of articulation was facilitated by the trend in European scholarship to classify and collectivise both man and nature into types. Derek Gregory has drawn parallels between Said and Foucault's focus on the accumulation of detail to support division and deployment of power (Gregory, 1995:458).

<sup>44</sup> In this context, Said's suggestion that enterprises such as the 1867 Paris International Exhibition and Verdi's opera *Aida* were mediums through which the world was reconstituted and displayed by the West is interesting (Said, 1993:144, 159).

and rationality of Occidental habits' contrasted with the 'bizarre jouissances' of the Orientals (1978:87).<sup>45</sup> Thus, Said presents the material power of the West supported by, and interwoven with, the power to project cultural representations presenting the West as a superior civilisation.

### *Norms*

As the discussion of representation and power suggests, normative qualities feature prominently in Said's conception of the West. He represents the deployment of norms by Western discourses as providing the grounds for a hierarchy in civilisational interaction. However, Said's discussion also highlights significant tensions between the norms of Western liberal humanism and Western imperialism.

The significance which Said attaches to norms in constituting Western self-images is evident in both his discussions of Orientalism and imperialism. For instance, he describes Orientalism as 'a family of ideas and a set of unifying values' (1978:41-2). The representations of the Orient which he discusses are loaded with normative assumptions which juxtapose inferior East to the West.<sup>46</sup> For example, Lord Cromer (1908) is cited as characterising Orientals as lethargic, suspicious, liars who 'in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race' (1978:39). Such 'essential knowledge', argues Said, reiterated over time acquired the status of scientific truth.

His observations suggest that through normative differentiation, the West constructed a positive self-image; but he further implies that normative differentiation helped justify Western power towards that region. For instance, Orientalism perceived the East as irrational.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, the West appears

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<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Said describes the pioneering Orientalist Silvestre de Sacy as seeing himself uncovering or bringing to light knowledge of the Orient. 'Knowledge was essentially the *making visible* of material ... Scholarly discipline was therefore a specific technology of power: it gained for its user [and his students] tool and knowledge which ... had hitherto been lost' (Said, 1978:127).

<sup>46</sup> Said repeatedly refers to the technique of dividing and compartmentalising humanity into binary opposites such as Orient and West, usually polarising the distinctions, 'the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western' (1978:46).

<sup>47</sup> See also Brian Turner's (1989) characterisation of Orientalism, identifying four main categories or tactics of differentiation, all with a strong normative basis. These encompass viewing Orientalism as a theory of despotic power in which despotism stifled social differentiation; as a discourse of

rational and capable of objective, ordered and scientific thought. The Orient is perceived as childlike, implying that the West is more mature and advanced.<sup>48</sup> The Orient and Islam are perceived to be depraved, blood-thirsty, deceitful.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, the West is presented as perceiving itself to be virtuous and capable of subjugating emotions. Furthermore, the Orient's perceived lack of honesty implies a limited capacity to exercise the rule of law, producing traditionalist or despotic, rather than modern, liberal structures of government. The non-Western 'native' is perceived as indolent therefore needing the overlordship of the vigorous Westerner (Said, 1978:40; 1993:202-4).<sup>50</sup> All of these representations have strong normative dimensions which both places the West on the moral high ground and, equally significantly, justifies the exercise of Western power over the East on the grounds of the East's moral weakness.

Said also suggests that the West was further empowered through normative differentiation in representing the East as not only primitive, but incapable of self-driven change (Said, 1978:298).<sup>51</sup> 'The very possibility of development, transformation, human movement - in the deepest sense of the word - is denied the Orient and the Oriental' (1978:208).<sup>52</sup> As Said notes, change, is often unilaterally equated with modernisation, which in the twentieth century in particular, has frequently been associated with Westernisation (1978:304). Again, this places the

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social change in which the Orient is assumed to be socially stagnant due to the weight of traditional authority; Orientalism as a theory of asceticism, with emphasis on the sensuality and sexuality of the East leading to indolence in contrast to the asceticism of the West; and Orientalism as a theory of discipline and rationality, with rationalisation as a process of cultural change peculiar to the West. These broad normative features also appear in Said's analysis of Orientalism.

<sup>48</sup> It might also suggest the adult's duty to instruct, guide, protect but also discipline the child when necessary.

<sup>49</sup> See Said's discussion of Islam (Said, 1978:62) and Said (1978:286-7) for twentieth century American representation of this image.

<sup>50</sup> See also Said's discussion of S.H. Alatas' work on the 'myth of the lazy native' in *Culture and Imperialism*. Alatas describes how the perceived indolence of the 'natives' in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific was viewed as a sign of weakness in character and used as a rationale for subjugation by European colonists, rather than being interpreted as a form of resistance to colonial rule (Said, 1993:307-8).

<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that, in this context, Said is discussing the views of Orientalist scholars from the twentieth century as well as the nineteenth.

<sup>52</sup> Said argues this is one of the 'dogmas' of Orientalism - to perceive the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself (1978:300-1).

West in a powerful position. It implies that the Orient can only change or develop under the guidance and tuition of the West (1978:253, 298). Even in the work of contemporary Oriental scholars, like Bernard Lewis, Said detects the view that the Orient can never improve itself or converge with the West until it comes to accept the Western way. If Said is correct, this places the East in a difficult position; it must come to terms with the West, yet is placed at a permanent disadvantage by its perceived lack of capacity to change. This effectively casts the asymmetrical relationship between East and West in stone, placing the West in permanent ascendancy.

Said's presentation of a Western self-image which encompasses normative differentiation is not limited to the imperial era, nor to Europe. He maintains that the perception that the East lacked the capacity for self-driven development continues in modern politics to bolster Western claims to global leadership. For instance, he locates Henry Kissinger's conception of the need for more advanced societies to construct world order within these structures of thought.<sup>53</sup> He also sees it demonstrated in American interventionism, where involvement is justified upon moral grounds, as in the Gulf War (1993:357).<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, he highlights dichotomies in Western norms relating to perceptions and treatment of the non-West. These derive primarily from the converse pulls of liberal humanism and imperialism. One such dichotomy relates to respect for the individual which lies at the heart of Western liberal humanism. For many of the authors discussed in previous chapters, the norm of individualism is central to the West. Yet, as Frantz Fanon has commented, colonial discourses

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<sup>53</sup> Said places Henry Kissinger within an expanded Orientalist tradition, arguing that Kissinger considered the world divided between those committed to objective scientific knowledge and cultures which have not yet attained this post-Newtonian mode of thought. The duty of post-Newtonian societies was to construct a world order in the face of contemporary world turmoil (Said, 1978:47).

<sup>54</sup> Said draws his illustration from modern scholars of Islam such as von Grunebaum (Said, 1978:298). However, similar opinions have been voiced with respect to other areas of the non-West, both in the past and recently. Notions of the East, this time Asia, as incapable of innovation have also been common. For instance, amongst the consistent assumptions which Richard Minear (1980) identifies in his discussion of Western scholarship on Japan is the belief that Japanese culture lacks creativity and originality. In contrast, Western culture is typified by a restless and creative spirit. These ideas have been reiterated in discussions of Japan's role of potential hegemon in the global political economy.

tended to conceive of the 'native' as part of a mass, a multitude, effectively dehumanising, deindividualising the non-Westerner (Fanon, 1963:43). Said similarly implies that the capacity of the West to view the Orient as inferior was facilitated by the tendency to always see the Arab as a collective entity (1978:230, 252), depriving non-Westerners of the quality of individualism which is central to the Western normative framework.<sup>55</sup>

His discussion of the nineteenth century emphasises that Western colonial and imperial practices led to the domination rather than the emancipation of non-Western peoples. Although acknowledging some opposition to imperialism within Europe, for instance, from the Abolitionists, this is outweighed for him by a more powerful pro-imperial culture (1993:201). Acceptance of empire and of racial superiority are perceived as components of 'structures of attitude and reference' underlying Western culture of this period (1993:62):

If there was cultural resistance to the notion of an imperial mission, there was not much support for that resistance in the main departments of cultural thought. (1993:96)

Furthermore, he suggests that 'structures of feeling' which accepted the need for empire could be found even amongst Western liberals, with Western humanism accepting and even rationalising colonialism on the basis of 'the idea of Western salvation and redemption through its 'civilising mission'' (1993:158), echoing Kipling's image of the Indian as a poor creature needing British tutelage to save it from its own corruption and underdevelopment (1993:202).<sup>56</sup> Even progressive elements of society, such as intellectuals, workers and women's movements, argues Said, were penetrated by Euro-centrism and even an enthusiasm for empire (1993:268). Despite recognising movements in the nineteenth century which

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<sup>55</sup> Said also points to normative inconsistencies in the politics of the West in the twentieth century, citing, for instance, the United States' record of support for non-democratic regimes (1993:363). He is most acutely aware of these in the context of the recent politics of the Middle East, highlighting the West's failure to condemn Israel for its treatment of the Palestinian people, the infringements of democracy and human rights which he argues Israel has perpetrated on its Arab community (1978:318-9).

<sup>56</sup> Modernising movements, such as the educational movements, mitigated the harshness of imperialism, but in Said's view, continued to preserve the division between Westerner and non-Westerner (1993:269-70).

opposed the practices of empire, Said argues that there was little deeper questioning of the ontological status of European domination and no overall condemnation of imperialism until after uprisings in the imperial domains had become too significant to be ignored (1993:289-91). Therefore, Said's own conception of the West presents humanist norms and institutions as not only failing to impede, but also co-existing with, imperial processes (1993:97).<sup>57</sup>

One of Said's key criticisms of the West is its failure to live up to the Enlightenment norms of emancipation and equality. In Said's view, many Western cultural theories which aspire to universalism assume and incorporate racial inequality, the subordination of inferior cultures, and the acquiescence of those who cannot represent themselves (1993:335). He finds hidden imperialist assumptions and liberal paternalism in even the most radical of the Western intellectual movements. Western Marxism, the Frankfurt School and French theoreticians of the mid twentieth century, all are criticised for continuing to produce theories which aspire to universality but fail to see their own Eurocentricity (Said, 1993:336).<sup>58</sup> It is only recently, observes Said, that Westerners have realised that what they have to say about history and culture of 'subordinate' people is challengeable by those people themselves (1993:235). In this context, Said shares something with Huntington who is also critical of the West's false universalism. Like Huntington, Said seeks from the West respect for other cultural norms. However, he stops short of complete cultural relativism in that he maintains a commitment to the underlying liberal humanist goals of equality and emancipation, despite the perceived failure of the West to uphold these values.

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<sup>57</sup> This is a point which troubles Said. In *Culture and Imperialism* he seeks to investigate how ongoing European culture made it possible for an imperial European not to see themselves as imperialist. Said qualifies his comments by explaining that this does not mean that he takes European culture to lack complexity, but the complexity and diversity in European culture for him operates within a broader context of imperialism (1993:97, 196).

<sup>58</sup> In this context, Said is a harsh critic of the failure of intellectuals in the United States and the West to challenge effectively the norms of the state. He refers to the 'sense of weightlessness' of cults such as post-modernism, discourse analysis, New Historicism and deconstruction with respect to public discourse, leaving debate of the serious crises of today's world to the media and politicians (1993:366-7).

Said represents the deployment of norms in Western discourses as significant in both defining the West's self-image and providing the grounds for hierarchy in its relationship with the non-West. However, he also identifies important dichotomies in the norms of Western imperialism and Western liberal humanism, meaning the West applied different normative standards to itself and the non-West. This normative differentiation, he implies, was facilitated by both spatial separation and essentialised images of the non-West. Nevertheless, although Said is critical of the West's failure to pursue the normative traditions of liberal humanism in the context of the non-West, this does not lead him to dismiss these traditions.

### *Institutions*

As with norms, Said's discussion of the institutions of the West highlights his perception of the close relationship between power and representation. Throughout *Orientalism*, he argues the close inter-twining of the ideas of Orientalism and the institutions of power; political, economic, and social. Orientalism, he suggests, provided a framework for, not just a rationalisation of, Western governance.<sup>59</sup> Orientalism thus provided core assumptions around which institutions of European governance formed as the West expanded its involvement in the East in the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> The 'institutional forms' of Western superiority included colonial governments, consular corps and commercial establishments (1978:227). Therefore, unlike the preceding authors, Said identifies colonial institutions as characterising the West. He closely links assumptions and representations of the non-West and the Orient with the formation of these institutions. However, these institutions themselves act to confirm the shape and character of the non-West as it became known to the West through discourses such as Orientalism. In this sense, for Said, the boundaries of the West and non-West are constantly enforced and reinforced through the interplay of discourse and interaction.

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<sup>59</sup> In fact, he notes the 'very close ties' between Orientalist discourse and 'enabling socio-economic and political institutions' as a factor which enhanced the durability of Orientalism (Said, 1978:6).

<sup>60</sup> For instance. Said quotes Curzon's comments that Oriental studies were the 'necessary furniture of Empire', assisting Britain in governing in the East whilst maintaining imperial authority (1978:214).

Whilst Said does not dwell on institutions such as the state, or law, he does refer to government as an indicator of significant difference, an institutional boundary between West and non-West. The West is represented as characterising itself by liberal institutions, in particular by self-government, in contrast to the despotism and stagnation of Oriental government (Turner, 1989:631). These assumptions are characterised as widespread, with Said drawing on illustrations ranging from the conservative Chateaubriand proposing that Europe should teach the Orient about liberty: 'Of liberty they know nothing; of propriety they have none; force is their God' (1978:172); to Marx's assumption that the replacement of Oriental despotism by British governance in India was a necessary stage in social revolution (1978:153); to administrators such as Cromer and Balfour, suggesting that the Orient is unused to, and effectively incapable of, self-government (1978:32-3, 228). Even liberals such as Joseph Conrad are viewed by Said as assuming the governmental incapacity of the non-West.<sup>61</sup> Said's work suggests that the West's low opinion of non-Western governmental institutions rests upon a sense of differentiation which permits it to apply different standards and norms to the non-West to those applied within the West, facilitating the toleration of colonial and imperial institutions (1978:33). It is founded on perceptions of the normative inferiority of the non-West. This further demonstrates the tensions perceived in Said's discussion of the normative dimensions of the West, between the ideals of liberal humanism and the practices of imperialism.

### ***Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

The interaction between West and non-West which Said sketches entails two key features: the employment of dialectical difference, and the imperial strength of the West. The West's perception of difference acts as both a rationale and a normative element of its imperial power. Said portrays a relationship between West and non-West which is not fixed, but changes in response to the level of the West's involvement with the non-West, and with the intellectual climate within the West.

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<sup>61</sup> In summarising Conrad's position, Said writes: 'Independence was for whites and Europeans; the lesser or subject people were to be ruled' (Said, 1993:26).



His West is not necessarily homogeneous, but it *is* consistent in maintaining a hierarchical relationship with the non-West (1993:127).

### *Difference*

Said's work highlights the employment of dialectical difference in constituting both non-West and West. The way in which the non-West is constituted is not constant, but varies according to relations between the societies and to shifts in intellectual trends in the West. Therefore, shifts in perceptions of difference appear driven as much, if not more, by trends within the West as the non-West.

Said portrays the West as differentiating itself through a variety of images of the non-West. These encompass images of the non-West as a romantic alternative to the modern West; as a threat to the West; and as inferior to the West. The Orient, argues Said, represents 'the other' close to hand, personifying for the West 'its cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other' (1978:1). In the late eighteenth century, many Europeans were inspired by an image of the mysterious and beautiful but distant East. Under the influence of the Romantic movement, the Orient was looked upon as a source of regeneration for Europe, providing ways to overcome the materialism and mechanism of Occidental culture (Said, 1978:115). The tendency to romanticise the East as the exotic other is for other commentators an important aspect of the West's relationship to the non-West, but it is not an aspect of Orientalism on which Said dwells (Kiernan, 1979; Fox, 1992).<sup>62</sup> For him, this romanticism illustrates a recurrent tendency to view the Orient, not on its own terms, but in terms of what it could do for Europe. In this context, the East acts as 'therapy' for a spiritually depleted West.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Fox describes this as 'affirmative Orientalism'. This relates to the positive but equally essentialised images of the East that can be found in the ideas of western intellectuals who sought in an idealised representation of the East qualities such as spirituality, non-violence, consensuality and communalism absent from a Europe which they perceived as modernised, aggressive, capitalist, and materialist (1992:152-3). Fox also goes beyond Said, in discussing the possibility that Orientalism was used in some cases by 'Orientals' such as Gandhi against Western domination.

<sup>63</sup> Note also Thomas' discussion of the trend towards positive but equally idealised and essentialised representations of non-Western peoples which have been, and continue to be, produced by liberal culture (Thomas, 1994).

Said's West is also differentiated through the recurrent image of the non-West, particularly the Orient, as a threat. Although the immediate threat to the West receded, if not reversed, in the eighteenth century and nineteenth century, Said sees its legacy continuing to shape European attitudes through to the present. He notes its revival this century with the challenges posed by the Arab Revolts and demands for self-government (1978:248). He further links these fears to those of the 'yellow peril'; the apprehension that Europe might be overwhelmed by an unstable or expansionist Asia (1978:251).<sup>64</sup>

In *Orientalism*, he is conscious of the renewed sense of menace with which the contemporary Arab world was viewed by the West, heightened by the 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars and the Oil Crisis (1978:286). American popular images of the Orient are perceived as sustaining essentialised, threatening representations; the sense that behind the dehumanised images of the scoundrel or the villain lurks the menace of *jihad*, the fear that Arabs or Muslims will take over the world (1978:287). Much of *Culture and Imperialism* was written during the Gulf War. The text is permeated by Said's perception of this conflict sustaining the representations of threat and hostility which have characterised the West's relationship with the Arab world (1993:42). Therefore, despite the West's sense of power, Said identifies a perception of vulnerability as an important part of its sense of identity.

A third powerful and perhaps predominant sense of difference which appears in Said's analysis is that based on Western superiority. In both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said describes a West which assumes itself to be a superior culture and civilisation (Said, 1978:231; 1993:96). The sense that the Orient is primitive and capable only of 'arrested development' rather than convergence with the West confirms the Orient's continued inferiority and conversely Western superiority (1978:234-5). Thus, the employment of dialectical difference in the West which Said describes creates a non-West which is simultaneously threatening and inferior.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, he argues that it was not so much the fear of destruction, but the fear of the removal of the barrier between East and West which so disturbed some Orientalist (1978:263).

<sup>65</sup> In this respect, it may be useful to keep in mind Bhabha's comments about the ambivalence of colonial discourse which suggests both fixity and order and, paradoxically, disorder and degeneracy

### *The Integrity of the West*

Despite identifying important continuities in discourse and interaction, Said's sense of the West's relationship with the non-West is not static. He marks changes in the nature of interaction, whilst reiterating an underlying sense of Western difference and superiority. His discussion implies that changes in the relationship stemmed both from differences in the degree and nature of Western involvement in the non-West, and from shifting trends within the West.

Said's West is not homogeneous in respect of its involvement in the non-West with differences in both capabilities and attitudes within the West. For instance, he identifies significant variations between British and French perspectives on the Orient, attributed to the different imperial relationship that these countries maintained with the region. The British are described as having a stronger, territorial and proprietorial sense of the Orient, rooted in its extensive colonial possessions, particularly in the Near East. The French, with fewer possessions, are characterised as engaged in 'intellectual imperialism' whose most significant manifestation was the sense of the *mission civilisatrice* (1993:205-6). In contrast to both, the United States had no direct colonial involvement in the Middle East, but has had substantial political, economic and military involvement with this region since the Second World War.

Said's work also suggests that the grounds for rationalisation of Western interaction with the non-West reflect changing political and intellectual currents within the West. As noted above, these shifted from the Romantic perception of the restorative nature of the Orient, to the 'scientific' perspective which justified the appropriation of one culture by a stronger one, as characterised by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt (1978:42).<sup>66</sup> In the nineteenth century, Orientalism was

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in its constitution of the 'Other' (Bhabha, 1983:18). Said's representation of the West conveys the anxieties and insecurities which were often an aspect of colonial rule but, as Thomas suggests, we often overlook (1994:15).

<sup>66</sup> See Said(1978:116-23, 127) and Dalby(1980:489) for a discussion of different intellectual trends within Orientalism. Said points to four significant currents of eighteenth century thought which moulded the emerging secular Orientalism in contrast to its religious antecedent. These are summarised by Dalby as imperialist exploration and expansion; a sense of historical and civilisational confrontation; a form of historical sympathy; and an urge to encompass and bring order to the whole universe of knowledge.

influenced by trends ranging from positivism, Darwinism, Freudianism, Marxism to Spenglerism (1978:43); and in the twentieth century, by a renewed humanism (1978:256; 1993:228). The West is perceived as constantly constructing and reconstructing the non-West in the context of competing views and varying societal conditions within the West. Yet, despite acknowledging the differing nature and shifting intellectual rationalisations of Western involvement in the non-West, Said argues that there were continuities in perceptions of self and other which provide cohesion to Western identity. However, there is a question as to the extent to which Said's West is a real and cohesive community.

Young raises the question of whether the Orient actually exists for Said. Said clearly argues that the Orient is a creation of the West, a projection of Western needs on the people of the Arab and Islamic worlds. It is not an empirical reality, 'an inert fact of nature'.<sup>67</sup> If the Orient does not exist as an authentic community, what does this imply for its alter ego, the West? Does it exist as an authentic community? Said has at times described the West in highly abstract terms, 'a play of projections, doublings, idealisations and rejections of a complex, shifting otherness' (Clifford, 1988:272).<sup>68</sup> It is undoubtedly perceived as a social construction:

...as both geographical and cultural entities - to say nothing of historical entities - such locales, regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are man-made. (Said, 1978:5)

However, to view the West as a social construction does not mitigate its authenticity, nor weaken its significance as a locale of power and domination, an agent which has the capacity to produce and project representations such as the Orient. As Gregory comments, Said's world is one of both materialism and

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<sup>67</sup> Clifford notes some ambivalence in Said's argument: 'Frequently he suggests that a text or tradition distorts, dominates, or ignores some real or authentic feature of the Orient. Elsewhere, however, he denies the existence of any 'real Orient' (1988:260).

<sup>68</sup> For instance, in a 1995 article, Said said: 'How can one speak of 'Western civilisation' except as in large measure an ideological fiction, implying a sort of detached superiority for a handful of values and ideas, none of which has much meaning outside the history of conquest, immigration, travel and the mingling of peoples that gave the Western nations their present mix of identities?' (1995:5).

representations which are at once abstractions and densely concrete fabrications (Gregory, 1995:476).

A second problem is Said's tendency to represent the West through generalisations which obscure complexities and contradictions within that imagined community. Although he rejects suggestions that the Orientalist perspective should be taken to represent the West as a whole (Said, 1995:3), he does identify fundamental assumptions, concepts and practices which distinguish the West. Consequently, his work has been criticised for itself slipping into the practice of essentialisation in articulating an all inclusive 'Occidentalism' (Clifford, 1988:271).<sup>69</sup> Said has also been criticised for failing to convey any real sense of heterogeneity in the field of Orientalism (Driver, 1992). Not all Orientalists shared the same visions and ideals. For instance, in the context of the British in India, Kopf(1980) identifies differences between Orientalists sympathetic to Indian culture, and Anglicists who sought to undermine it.<sup>70</sup> From Said's perspective, these differences would be mitigated by both parties basically seeking the same ends via different means; the modernisation of India. Furthermore, it could be argued that exceptions and points of difference can always be found within any generalised concept or category. However, as Driver points out, to ignore such differences limits our awareness of tensions and contradictions within Orientalism and, therefore, within the West (1992:32-3).<sup>71</sup> Consequently, despite the heterogeneity Said acknowledges in

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<sup>69</sup> Said's *Orientalism* was criticised by many reviewers who felt that his portrayal of Oriental scholars was too selective, his treatment of their work reductionist (Hourani, 1979; Kerr, 1980; Lewis, 1993) or inaccurate (Greene, 1979; Lewis, 1993). Mani & Frankenburg(1985) are also critical of the monolithic, undifferentiated and uncontested image of Orientalism as a form of knowledge which Said presents. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said does make reference to diverse schools within imperial European culture, some more respectful of existing, pre-colonial cultures. All, however, appear to be focused on the same aim of governing and modernising or 'Westernising' these societies. Therefore, the differences between them ultimately may be more one of method rather than intent. See Said (1993:180).

<sup>70</sup> Looking at Orientalism in the context of the Indian subcontinent, Kopf(1980) argues Said's analysis fails to note significant distinctions between these two schools of scholarship. The scholars of the Orientalist school, he argues, were respectful of Oriental culture and were in turn respected for their contributions to Asian culture. The Anglicist school, Kopf argues, more accurately reflected the qualities which Said criticises in Orientalism. Kopf, like Mani & Frankenburg(1985:176-7), argues that Said's discussion fails to highlight the dialectical nature of the colonial encounter which shaped Orientalism.

<sup>71</sup> MacKenzie(1993) also criticises Said for failing to address the divisions within the West. The prime 'other' in nineteenth century Britain, he argues, was constituted by rival European powers, rather than by outsiders. However, Said does acknowledge the importance of inter-European rivalry,

Western interests and involvement in the non-West, we are often left with a monolithic sense of the West. Admittedly, describing the West is not Said's primary goal, but his projection of a monolithic West is at odds with his declared intentions of dismantling such representations.

However, does the existence of differences within the West undermine Said's sense of an underlying Western imperial culture, or alter his perception of interaction? In the colonial and post-colonial contexts, the differences within the West appear as of less consequence than the gulf of power and expectations which separated the coloniser from the colonised, particularly when viewed through the eyes of the colonised. As noted above, the West is fundamentally imperial, its primary relationship to the non-West is one of dominance, both in colonial and post-colonial eras. At this level, Said's West is united by its domination of the non-West.

### *Imperialism*

The imperial relationship is the principal focus of Said's discussion of interaction between West and non-West, and imperialism the principal lens through which Western writers viewed societies such as the Orient in his opinion (Said, 1978:11, 204; 1993). In Said's West, perceptions of difference and superiority helped to rationalise and to constitute imperial power and were reinforced by increased involvement with the non-West in the late nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> What Said notes in *Orientalism* is a persistent sense of Europe's right to suzerainty over the weaker Orient (1978:179, 213),<sup>73</sup> rationalised by the 'civilising mission', which is itself

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particularly that between England and France (Said, 1993:99). MacKenzie also comments on the absence of class relationships from Said's analysis in *Culture and Imperialism*. This is perhaps one consequence of an absence of more detailed consideration of the material dimensions of power in Said's work.

<sup>72</sup> Said's sense of the growth of European involvement in the region is illustrated by his references to, not only to British and French interests in the Orient, but also to Russian involvement (Samarkand, Bohara and the Transcaspian railway); German, Austro-Hungarian and French intervention in North Africa; European involvement in support of different factions in clashes in Lebanon; the importance of the broader 'Eastern question' in European politics; and the question of the protection of minorities, such as the Druze, Armenians, and Kurds, which concerned various European powers, particularly the French (Said, 1978:191, 220).

<sup>73</sup> Said implies that the West's sense of entitlement, or administrative obligation, was enhanced by the state of affairs in the Near Orient region the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century;

fed by Western growth. Geographic expansion increased knowledge about other peoples, and provided opportunities to employ that knowledge in their governance which in turn produced the rhetoric of the 'civilising mission' (1993:130).

Whilst his analysis links discourses of difference to Europe's physical colonial expansion, Said sees little alteration in the underlying attitudes of inequality towards the non-West resulting from the West's withdrawal from empire. The non-West continues to be articulated by the West; the West continues to be seen as the central focus of history (Said, 1978:238). However, he acknowledges challenges to Western authority, such as the Arab Revolts, calls for self-government, and the impact of World War I, which reduced Western global suzerainty and contributed to a reassessment of the relationship (1978:248, 257). He also attributes this reassessment to a new humanism generated, in part, by the perceived weakening of the West's power. For instance, justification of Oriental studies shifted from the need for better management of the Orient, to the need to help the East recover 'its rightful place in humanity'. However, it was further justified as helping the West come to know itself better through knowledge of the East (1978:256-7). Once again, this suggests for Said that the West's attitude to the non-West is shaped primarily by its own needs, the non-West remaining essentially a passive object of study. Furthermore, he suggests that the reassessment of West/non-West relations and even decolonisation did not alter the underlying hegemonic assumptions. For Said, the West has been persistently unable or unwilling to acknowledge the rights of non-Western peoples to function outside Western tutelage.<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, despite the decline of formal empire, Said perceives the West's enduring cultural hegemony as sustaining influence over the non-West. Here, Said is not only referring to elements of structural power which Bull and Watson also

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for instance, French experiences in Syria, and the weakness of Asiatic Turkey post-World War I-viewed as the 'Sick Man of Europe', awaiting dismemberment (1978:223).

<sup>74</sup> He describes this as the 'inability of the Western humanistic conscience to confront the political challenges of the imperial domains' (Said, 1993:251). See Said's discussion of British attitudes to India in the early twentieth century, as illustrated by E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (Said, 1993:241-52) and French attitudes to Algeria as illustrated in the work of Camus (Said, 1993:204-24). Although authors such as Paul Mus (*Viet-nam: Sociologie d'une guerre* 1952) are more critical of the European critical role, in this case the French in Indochina, Said still detects the persistence of the concept of tutelage.

acknowledge. He also suggests that the West retains the capacity and disposition to intervene in the affairs of the non-West. This implies that interaction continues to be shaped by imperial discourses. The medium for these discourses, however, has shifted, with a less formal, but no less powerful American imperium supplementing, then succeeding European empire (1978:285; 1993:7).<sup>75</sup> Despite its limited colonial possessions, Said places United States' foreign policy clearly into the tradition of imperialism, expressed through intervention (1993:xxvi, 64, 357). As Said suggests, its sense of manifest destiny can be perceived as a civilising mission, projected in the form of the rule of law and the maintenance of order rather than a standard of civilisation.<sup>76</sup> Despite its limited colonial experience, Said suggests the United States employed Orientalist assumptions in its growing involvement in that region in the twentieth century (1978:285-328).<sup>77</sup> Through this medium, Said suggests that Orientalist perception have been perpetuated in the post-colonial era.

A second medium through which he suggests these images have been perpetuated is through their internalisation by the Arab world itself. He portrays the East as deeply implicated in the Western Oriental system, through its attachment to the market system and to Western ideas about modernisation, progress and culture: 'the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalising' (Said, 1978:325). Therefore, Said's discussion suggests that, whilst direct Western power has declined, imperialist discourses which project Western cultural hegemony continue to dominate interaction in the post-colonial world. This implies that

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<sup>75</sup> Said defines imperialism as the practice, theory and attitudes of the dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory. Colonialism, defined as 'almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of a settlement on distant territory' (1993:8). Although the United States never saw itself as a colonial power, it did annex the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1898.

<sup>76</sup> For Said, this has meant extensive United States intervention in Asia, Central America and the Middle East, in forms ranging from the financing of coups and assassinations attempt right through to full military intervention to protect regimes or forces considered friendly to United States interests but which Said often finds undemocratic and unjust. Said notes that a United States military intervention in the Third World occurred every year between 1945 and 1967. See Said(1993:344-67).

<sup>77</sup> These included the perception of the need to manage and reconstruct the affairs of the East; the employment of essentialised images of Arabs and Muslims as sheikhs, dictators or terrorists; and as people lacking literature or art (Said, 1993:356-64).



interaction is still shaped by discourses which entail a hierarchical view of cultural world order, with the West at its peak, despite the appearance of equality which the institutions of modern world politics provide.

## *Conclusion*

Said's conception of the West stands in marked contrast to those previously discussed. As noted above, it is a conception that operates at two levels. The first entails Said's representation of how the West saw itself, as illustrated by the discourses of Orientalism and imperialism. At a second level, Said himself represents the West, focusing on it primarily as an imperialist entity. Imperialism is only lightly touched upon by most of the preceding scholars. It is incorporated into the international society perspective, but it lies at the very heart of Said's conception. This does not mean that Said does not acknowledge liberal dimensions of the West, but these are perceived as co-existing in tension with imperialism. The liberal West, therefore, fundamentally lacks integrity in Said's conception.

Similarly, assumptions about the cultural world order emerge at two levels. That which emerges from the West's own representations, as seen by Said, is characterised by civilisational hierarchy with the West at the apex. On a second level, however, Said's own perspective rejects the efficacy of hierarchy, seeing instead multiple civilisations existing within a broader community of humanity. Therefore, whilst Said's own perspective is a pluralist one, it differs from Spengler's in seeing humanity as ultimately forming a single community. However, at another extreme, it also contrasts with that of Fukuyama in that Said rejects the idea of the West as a universal civilisation. Curiously, Said's suggestion that the universalism of the West masks its dominance of other civilisations resonates strongly with Huntington's position on this issue.

Finally, the history of interaction within the cultural world order is seen to emerge differently at these two levels. The West's self-representation implies that interaction between West and non-West has been a positive process of development and enlightenment. Said's own perspective suggests, in contrast, a history of domination of the non-West, facilitated by and reflected in, Western practices of designating space, and of representing other races and religions as

inferior. Interaction is critical to Said's conception of the West. The West's impact on other societies is not incidental as in Spengler, or a challenge as in Toynbee, or developmental as in Fukuyama. Like Bull, Said understands the interaction between the expanding West and other societies as a process which helped to constitute the West. But whereas Bull considers how the institutions and structures are produced by this process, Said focuses on its constitution of the intellectual and representational dimensions of Western identity and power. Said's West is an imagined community which is constituted through the reiteration of assumptions of self and other which acquire the status of truth over time.

The use of genealogical methods and historical perspectives are critical to his presentation of conceptions of the West. He places the contemporary West in a historical context to identify continuities in assumptions and perceptions. However, unlike Toynbee, his is not a broad macrohistory, either of the West or of cultural interaction. Said selectively focuses on texts and instances of civilisational encounter in the context of European imperialism and its aftermath.

Said's discussion of the West does not dwell on the details of the material society; these are assumed. Instead it focuses on the ideas, assumptions and knowledge constructions that constitute its material or 'objective' boundaries. He attaches great importance to the norms and values which differentiate the West from other civilisations. However, whilst all authors discussed have identified important normative and institutional boundaries for the West, Said's interpretation of these boundaries is infinitely more critical. He does not see these as the symptoms or agents of progress or spiritual growth, but as tools used to reinforce the West's image of its own superiority and legitimate its dominance of the non-West. These normative and material boundaries are perceived, not just as phenomena of the imperial past, but as remaining part of the popular culture and politics of the twentieth century, unconsciously replicated in many aspects of Western society. In this, Said highlights the role of ideas and norms as important vehicles for perpetuation and reproduction of civilisational identities.

Ultimately, Said's representation and conception of the West are dominated by a sense of its power. Interaction is perceived as shaped by inequalities of power. In contrast to Spengler, Toynbee, Huntington and even Bull, he does not regard the

West's power as under serious threat. In fact, his analysis of the West's self-image suggests that perceptions of threat have significantly enhanced the West's sense of cohesion and identity. In contrast, his conception presents a community which retains a huge capacity to dominate other civilisations

Although his work is critical of Western domination, it does not reject the influences of the West wholesale. Instead, he draws on core Enlightenment ideas, such as emancipation and equality, in criticising the West's engagement with the non-West. One aspect of this criticism pertains to the Euro-centricity of Western perspectives, a quality this study has observed in the work of many of the preceding authors. In contrast, Said turns Euro/Western-centricism on its head and makes it an object of investigation.

Said does not present as clear a framework for the future as that found in the work of Huntington or Fukuyama. However, he does suggest a way of understanding world politics from the perspective of those outside the West which accentuates the significance of knowledge and representation to relationships. Furthermore, placing contemporary interaction into an imperialist historical framework, his work suggests that, despite institutions such as sovereign equality, significant inequalities and assumptions of hierarchy remain in world politics. He also identifies features which could enhance future interaction, such as mutual respect between cultures, whilst maintaining an underlying respect for broad human goals. Perhaps Said himself best articulates the balance he seeks in this cultural world order:

No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things. (Said, 1993:408)

## *Conclusion*

### *Continuities and Differences: Conceptions of the West and Cultural World Order Compared*

At the outset, this dissertation recognised a growing interest in the role of civilisational and cultural identities among International Relations scholars. Assessing the role of such identities presents tremendous challenges. This is in no small part due to their complex nature. Civilisational and cultural identities are a blend of history, tradition, representation and normative commitments, all subject to interpretation. The breadth of scope and ethereal qualities of these identities can incline us to seek to reduce their complexity through simplified representations. This dissertation does not seek to dismiss but to explore the complexity of civilisational identity and its implications. It has focused on one, critical civilisational identity in world politics - the West, a group of societies and states which has dominated world politics and whose ideas and experiences have shaped International Relations. The dissertation has not sought to identify a single, authentic representation of this community, nor to portray the West as a static or homogeneous community. As is true of discussions of culture in general, there is no one account of what constitutes the West. Through examining a variety of conceptions, the dissertation has demonstrated its complexity, contingency and dynamism. It has also identified significant relationships between these conceptions and broader perceptions about the nature of the cultural world order. These, it suggests, have significant implications for considering the possibilities for interaction in world politics.

#### *Civilisational Frameworks*

The dissertation demonstrates that the West is not conceived of simply as a territory or a racial community, or defined purely through distinctive political

institutions. These factors contribute to the identity of the West, but it is generally conceived of as a broad cultural and normative community. Conceptions of the West are not formed in isolation, but in the context of assumptions about the composition and nature of interaction between different civilisational identities in world politics which I have here defined as 'the cultural world order'. The dissertation suggests that International Relations theory can be enriched by reflection on how our understanding of world politics is framed by assumptions about the cultural world order; in particular, the way in which we conceive of the West and its role in relation to other civilisational identities. These assumptions are not uniform, but reflect a variety of historical and intellectual influences. They help to shape an image of the world and frame perceptions of what is feasible and desirable in interaction with other peoples.

The dissertation has examined conceptions represented in the work of a variety of scholars drawn from different periods of the twentieth century and from different schools of thought. These illustrate a range of important perspectives on what critical qualities constitute the West, and of the role of the West in world politics. Comparison of these conceptions has produced interesting differences and parallels. Important differences are evident regarding perceptions of the nature of civilisations and of the course of human development which contribute to perceptions of the cultural world order and of the role of the West within it. Surprising parallels are identified between particular authors of the early era with particular contemporary authors, and radical differences between authors from the same era. For instance, one of the most radical perspectives which rejects conceptions of progress and the unity of mankind, and presents the West as a late or post-modern civilisation in a culturally fragmented world comes not from the radical critic Edward Said, but from the early twentieth century historian, Oswald Spengler. Moreover, strong parallels can be drawn between the almost post-modern conception of cultural world order found in Spengler with that found in the work of the conservative American scholar, Samuel Huntington. This suggests that conceptions of the West are not simply shaped by the influence of the era in which they are framed, but are also significantly shaped by the intellectual and normative concerns of the particular author.

Two significant threads can be identified in these perceptions of civilisation. The first is the perception of civilisation as a process, a movement towards an ideal which encompasses all humanity in a process of progressive historical development. The second perceives civilisations as a plurality of separate communities pursuing independent histories. Francis Fukuyama's conception of the West, for instance, is strongly influenced by the perception of the West as at the forefront of a universal, civilising process. In contrast, both Spengler and Huntington analyse the West as a distinct community within a cultural world order characterised by separate and largely incommensurable civilisations. Other scholars, such as Wight, Bull and, ultimately, Toynbee engage elements of both perspectives in their analysis of the West, blending a sense of universal progress with the interaction of a plurality of civilisations, resulting in a cultural world order which implies a hierarchy of civilisations. Said's personal perspective, as distinct from his representation of Western perspectives, recognises a plurality of civilisations, but also acknowledges the importance of their existing within a broader human community. There is a marked tendency in all the texts to conceive of the West, or argue it conceives of itself, at the apex of a technical and normative hierarchy.

The perception of the nature of interaction between civilisations within the cultural world order is significant, since it can lead to expectations that civilisations will remain independent, or suggest that they may ultimately converge. Interaction can be perceived of as primarily conflictual or cooperative. These contrasting expectations are most marked in the work of Fukuyama and Huntington. For Fukuyama, there is a sense of humanity gradually converging on a model of modernisation. For Huntington, differences between civilisations are becoming more marked as the sense of cohesion within them develops. In contrast to both, Said appears to reject both the sense of civilisational hierarchy or convergence, and the representation of civilisations as necessarily segregated, hostile and incommensurable. These expectations have important implications for analysis of the role of the West and the future of interaction in world politics.

The authors' varying conceptions of the nature of civilisations are related in part to their conceptions of history. For Fukuyama, history is clearly directional, and

progressive; for Spengler, it is cyclical, as is the growth and decline of civilisations. Toynbee understands human history, and therefore the history of civilisations, as moving in waves. However, within the history of individual civilisations, he identifies patterns of growth and decay. The international society authors have a mixed view; Wight identifies ineluctable patterns in the conflictual history of humanity, yet simultaneously senses progress in the evolution of the structures of international society. A sense of broader human progress is more evident in Bull's work, although this progress continues to be perceived within the constraints of power politics.

The authors also vary in the scope and depth of their historical analysis, Toynbee painting a broad and detailed historical canvas of which the West was an important, but fairly recent component. Spengler's discussion of the West also ranges over an extensive historical period. Neither viewed the history of the West as synonymous with that of mankind; both placed it in a broader historical and cultural context which challenged the optimistic assumptions of many contemporaries and predecessors, particularly assumptions about the West as engaged in infinite progress. In contrast, Fukuyama and Huntington's conceptions of the West are cast largely within the context of modern European and American history. Their contemplation of other, non-Western cultures lacks depth. The international society authors focus primarily on the evolution of the West and its expansion. While their historical analysis is deeper than that of Huntington or Fukuyama, their histories of other civilisations are also constructed primarily in relation to that of the West. The Western-centricity of these perspectives is highlighted by Said's approach which accentuates a tradition of imperialism in Western culture, using a history of this discourse to show how representations supporting domination of the West over the non-West evolve over time.

The historical perspectives of the various scholars are significantly linked to their assumptions about the possibility for progress and change in world politics. Fukuyama's Hegelian view of history clearly suggests the possibility of not only change, but also progress. This is a possibility which Spengler emphatically rejects at the level of human community. Civilisations may achieve a measure of progress within the context of their own evolution but, much like any organic entity, their

progress is finite and bound to lead to decay. Toynbee views progress within civilisations as possible, but usually finite, although he holds out some hope for reversing the process of decay. Ultimately, he suggests true progress can be achieved, but at the transcendental rather than the temporal level. Huntington's perception of the cultural world order implies change though not progress, but his discussion of Western political institutions implies the possibility of political progress.

Two dimensions to progress can be identified. There is material progress which all the authors recognise as a major feature of the West. For Fukuyama, this is a significant element in modernisation and the achievement of the universal, rational state. However, material progress is not uniformly viewed as positive or infinite. Both Spengler and Toynbee are pessimistic about the long-term impact of technological progress both on the physical environment, on the human spirit. They therefore view material progress as a source of strength but also as a potential source of Western destruction. These concerns, voiced in an earlier era, sound strangely prescient in the late twentieth century. The second dimension of progress is that of moral or normative progress. Here, only Spengler is totally negative regarding the potential for human progress, the other scholars all acknowledging the potential for progress at some level and the seeds of normative or spiritual progress in Western society or thought. For Toynbee, the most significant aspect of a civilisation's growth is the spiritual process of self-realisation. Fukuyama also highlights the central role of moral and ideological growth in civilisational evolution. Wight and Bull's work suggests that the Western-based international society has achieved some measure of progress in mediating the impact of conflict in world politics. Even Said implies some faith in the potential for progress in the broader human community based on the ideals articulated in the European Enlightenment.

Perceptions of the nature of civilisations, of history and of progress provide the foundations for the construction of a cultural world order, the crucial context for civilisational interaction. The authors' understanding of the sources of civilisational interaction also vary greatly. Spengler views civilisations as organic entities; their internal life-forces and characters providing the source of action and



interaction. Toynbee views the impetus for change and growth emanating from responses to challenges thrown up by other civilisations, the environment or by processes of development within a civilisation. The international society scholars describe the interdependent evolution of a system, with structures that stem from within civilisations and evolve historically; these structures become part of civilisational evolution and interaction and, eventually, the framework for inter-civilisational interaction. For Fukuyama, ideas are the source of action which shape the material world; the drive to achieve the perfect, rational society is the force for change. In contrast, Huntington conveys a more 'Hobbesian' image of civilisational interaction, the units within the cultural world order being independent and aggressively seeking security and power. Said's own cultural world order encompasses a singular human community, with the interaction between smaller units deeply affected by frequency of interaction, and by power differentials.

The significance attached to civilisational interaction also varies across perspectives. For Spengler and Huntington, for instance, interaction is significant and challenging, but not a process which defines or drives the West. Yet to others, interaction is critical in shaping the West's identity. Toynbee sees the challenges which interaction with other more powerful civilisations posed as formative in the West's evolution. For Bull and Watson, interaction with other civilisations was one of the processes through which the West internationalised its structures and institutions and enhanced its power and status. From a very different perspective, Said also sees the West defining its own identity on an ongoing basis through interaction with, and representation of, non-Western peoples.

Therefore, each of these authors present a distinct image of cultural world order. The most significant areas of difference and commonality perhaps lie in perceptions of human progress, and regarding levels of human diversity. These images of the cultural world order provide the context within which conceptions of the West can be understood. But at the same time, it should be recognised that, given the level of its influence in world politics, assumptions about the West may in turn help to shape perceptions of both the desired and the possible cultural world order.

## ***Conceptions of the West***

A sense of the West as a clearly identified community emerges from this survey, with points of commonality in the way its identity and history are perceived. This provides some sense of continuity regarding who and what constitutes the West within the different perspectives. However, each presents a complex and multi-layered conception of the West which gives a distinct interpretation of objective features of the West. Each conception also entails a strong, normative dimension which again demonstrates variation in emphasis and interpretation. While objective, material criteria are utilised by all in their conceptions, it is the various meanings with which these are inscribed which gives substance to the identity of this imagined community.

The essential features each selects reflect the different contexts in which these representations were produced. However, the variation in conceptions of the West produced in the same era, such as that between Bull and Said, or between Huntington and Fukuyama, suggest that intellectual and normative influences also significantly shape these conceptions.

## ***Territorial Boundaries***

Each of these texts views Western Europe and the United States as constituting the territorial heartland of the West. Russia is generally, but not always, excluded. For instance, Said appears to treat nineteenth century Russia as part of the imperial West, but it is clearly excluded from the West by Spengler, Toynbee, Fukuyama and Huntington. An implicit sense of the territorial expansion of the West emerges from all the texts; but this is linked, not just to the spread of European peoples or even ideas, but to the deep inculcation of European norms and institutions into the structures of societies outside of Europe. For instance, the international society authors, equate the expansion of the West, prior to the creation of a global international society, with the expansion, not so much of the European state system, but of European international *society* to colonies such as North America. The authors vary in their interpretation of the role of the United States as the territorial focus of the West. For the American authors it is very much the focus; for the others, the focus shifts over time from Europe, or in Spengler's case,

Germany, to the United States as the balance of material power shifts in the twentieth century or, for Spengler, as the civilisation begins to decay. There is also an interesting variation in the perception of the relationship between the community and the geography of the West. For Spengler and Toynbee, land and environment critically shape the West's character. For other authors, the occupation and inscription of territory and boundaries is more significant, particularly Said for whom geography and power are intrinsically linked. In this respect, the perception of geography found in Said, and even in Huntington, is strongly political; the relationship of community to land more socially and historically constituted than organic. Therefore, territory is a significant feature in all the conceptions, but none perceive the West as simply a static, territorial community.

### ***Religious Boundaries***

There is a clear sense in all of these conceptions of religion playing a critical but complex role in defining the West. The legacy of religious identity is commonly perceived as differentiating the West and providing a source of normative cohesion. However, interpretations of the role and nature of religion vary. For instance, for Spengler, religion is not a universal force, but particular to each culture; whereas for Toynbee, religion becomes a progressive force which has the capacity to save the West and mankind in general. In contrast, the treatment of religion in Huntington and Fukuyama is less extensive and less profound.

Religion, and Christianity in particular, are broadly perceived as providing the foundations for the West as a community. First and foremost, Christianity differentiated members of this community from neighbouring people of other faiths, primarily Islam. The confrontational relationship with Islam is widely perceived as a defining one for the West. Toynbee, however, also highlights the importance of the growing rift between Western Christendom and the Eastern Orthodox community as enhancing the sense of a distinct Western community. Differentiation from the outside is based on a sense of common interests and values within and Huntington stresses the significance of common Christian values as fundamental to the modern West. Wight and Toynbee, however, further highlight

the foundations provided for the modern Western states-system in the political institutions of the society of Christian states which evolved under the papacy.

Christianity is also widely perceived as helping to shape the character of the West. Spengler emphasises the strength of individualism which characterises Christianity, and in particular, early Catholicism which for him provides the quintessence of Western religion. Wight focuses on the universalism and missionary spirit which were important elements in the growth of the Christian faith and which accompanied European expansion. Fukuyama and Huntington accentuate the socio-economic dimension of religious influence, noting the relationship between Christianity and the institutions of democracy and capitalism; but in marked contrast to Spengler, they treat the character of the Protestant rather than the Catholic faith as the most significant influence.

The conceptions of the West found in Bull and Watson, and which Said critiques, provide a further slant on the role of religion, accentuating the perception of Christianity as not only distinguishing the West, but also providing a superior faith. From this perspective, religion both distinguishes and normatively empowers the West.

However, the West is widely perceived as being distinguished, not only by the qualities of Christianity, but by its treatment of religion. Secularism, or the removal of religion from the public sphere, is variously applauded and criticised by the authors under review, but all recognise its role in distinguishing the West. For Toynbee, the rise of secularism marks the West's transition from the medieval to the modern. Whereas Spengler sees the rise of secularism as a sign of the spiritual atrophy of the West, for Huntington and Fukuyama it marks the political progressiveness of the West in comparison to other civilisations. Said, however, accentuates the continuities between the secular and religious West in his argument that the secular culture continued to employ the perceptions of superiority towards Islam and the non-Christian world developed within the religious culture. For all these authors, therefore, the religious identity of the West provides crucial foundations for modern Western civilisation, but in different ways.

### ***Racial Boundaries***

None of the scholars discussed perceives the West primarily as a racial community, or employs notions of racial superiority based on biological factors. Spengler, for instance, claims race is a spiritual rather than a biological category. However, all implicitly recognise or employ race as an important source of differentiation. This is most explicit in Spengler and Toynbee who both discuss racial differences between the West and other peoples as of importance. This is strongest in Spengler who identifies an organic link between 'blood', land and community, defining Western peoples as members of the 'Faustian' race. Bull and Said, however, bring to light the politics of race, or the way in which during the nineteenth century, as Western economic and imperial power became more pronounced, race was increasingly perceived as accentuating difference and hierarchy between West and non-West. In Bull and Watson's work, race provides a barrier, first between members of European international society and those outside, and then within the multi-racial international society, separating West from non-West. For Said, assumptions of racial superiority helped legitimise the practices of imperialism.

The role of race is least explicit in Fukuyama and Huntington, but it is not absent. Racial differentiation appears as something of an anomaly in Fukuyama's West, an anachronistic legacy of the past which should pass once Western society perfects the implementation of its ideology of equality. In Huntington, there is little discussion, nor approval of racial differentiation. However, he stresses the importance of blood ties, defined as ethnicity, in forming identity and generating conflict. He demonstrates serious concerns about threats to the cultural homogeneity of the West emanating primarily from the influx but non-integration of different ethnic groups. His concerns about challenges to the West from other civilisational groups also echo those expressed by Spengler and Toynbee regarding the threats the 'coloured' races of the world present to West. This raises the question of whether race is a latent element in his conception of the West.

### ***Power***

The role which power plays in these conceptions is also complex. All perceive the West as a civilisation of unprecedented power. Western technical ingenuity is

recognised as underlying its capacity to expand geographically, and project military force, economic enterprise and political institutions. The components of power, however, are variously perceived. For most, they encompass technical and material capability based on the scientific and industrial revolutions of Europe which Toynbee and Bull discuss as allowing the West to unite the world within a single technical framework. Fukuyama, more than the others, emphasises the economic dimension of the West's power; its material capability enhanced by the development of capitalism which for him has proved the most efficient model for development and modernisation. In contrast, Spengler regards capitalism and the materialism of which it is a symptom as a sign of atrophy in Western civilisation. Huntington acknowledges, but does not explore the economic dimensions of Western power. He suggests that the core of Western power *vis à vis* other civilisations is based on its capacity for organised violence. Military capability is perceived as the foundation of the West's 'hard power'.

However, there is a further dimension to the West's power which permeates all the texts, this is what Huntington describes as 'soft power'; that derived from culture or ideology. This includes the institutional resources which play such a significant role in Wight and Bull's conception of the power of the West: that is, the West is perceived as deriving influence from the internationalisation of structures and institutions developed in Western Europe. These, whilst global in scope, reflect and therefore privilege Western interests since underlying these institutional structures are Western ideas and values. But it is Said who accentuates the cultural hegemony of Western ideas as critical. For Huntington, this hegemony is simply correlated to the West's military and economic capabilities; 'soft power' built upon 'hard power'. But for Said, cultural hegemony is deeply interwoven with the construction and projection of Western authority over the non-West. Western power, perceived as imperial in nature, is not only supported but also constructed by the deployment of favourable representations of the West in contrast to the non-West. Hard power is therefore perceived as interwoven with 'soft power'.

We can further identify in these conceptions a sense of the West deriving power from the strength of its inner resources as well as its external capacity. For Spengler, this entails a sense that Western power is based on a questing and

inquiring spirit; for Toynbee, on the West's ability to meet challenges; for Fukuyama on perceptions of the moral legitimacy of the Western system of governance.

Although all the scholars discussed view the West's power as unprecedented, all except Said discuss it as under threat of diminution. Most interesting is that whilst the West is perceived as threatened by encroachment from without by, for instance, Spengler and Huntington, nearly all seem equally concerned about threats to Western cohesion and stability emanating from within. Spengler's organic conceptualisation of the West presents it as approaching exhaustion in its life-cycle. Features which to others represent Western progress, such as technology and capitalism, are viewed as symptomatic of decline. Toynbee is also concerned that the material capacity of the West masks its spiritual depletion. In some respects, Spengler and Toynbee echo the fear of earlier authors such as John Stuart Mill on the debilitating effects of cultural atrophy, of *ennui* and complacency, which can weaken a developed civilisation. As noted above, both also demonstrate fear of the negative physical and spiritual consequences of the spread of technology. Fukuyama also identifies potential internal sources of Western decline, but for him these are the destructive tendencies which the mediocrity of a system of perfect equality and recognition of all citizens could engender. Huntington fears Western complacency and weakening normative cohesion, calling upon the West to consolidate its existing power. Although Bull and Watson also observe the weakening of the West's capacity to directly control the affairs of non-Western societies, their discussion of institutional structures implies that the West retains a large degree of indirect global influence. This, however, is also perceived as under challenge from increasingly assertive non-Western societies, threatening to undermine the institutions and norms of the Western-based international society. Said stands out in his representation of Western power as neither benign nor fading, but still capable of threatening and dominating other peoples. Therefore, the West's power is perceived as finite, although as Said's work implies, it remains substantial.

## *Norms*

The conceptions of the West examined all entail a strong normative dimension. For most, norms are fundamental in distinguishing the West from others and providing it with a sense of commonality within. Furthermore, norms appear to contribute substantially to establishing an implicit sense of hierarchy, with Western norms and values perceived, not only as different, but often as superior to those of other societies. However, the identification and interpretation of the West's key norms also leads to interesting points of difference. The study reveals points of commonality between authors from very different eras and perspectives, such as between Toynbee and Huntington; and points of difference between contemporaries such as Fukuyama and Huntington. These derive from their interpretation of Western norms within the broader context of the cultural world order.

A number of fundamental qualities are identified with the West across the broad spectrum of these conceptions. These include individualism, rationality, freedom and equality. These norms reflect the ideals of the European Enlightenment and the French and American Revolutions which symbolise for most of the authors the degree of normative development achieved by the West. However, the interpretation of their significance varies; for Fukuyama, they are elements of man's broader moral progress, a belief also implicit in Bull. For Huntington, these qualities distinguish Western, but not necessarily human progress. However, his work still suggests these demonstrate the West to be the most advanced civilisation. For Spengler, however, the norms of the Enlightenment are neither permanent nor universal, but symptomatic of the West's ebbing spirituality and gradual decline.

While norms are critical to the conception of the West found in both Spengler and Toynbee, these are represented as aspects of the West's deeper spiritual identity which are subject to adaptation as the civilisation meets the challenges of its evolution. For authors such as Fukuyama, Huntington and Wight, the norms noted above appear more deeply ingrained in the evolved identity of the modern West.



However, significant points of tension add complexity to the normative coherence of the West in a number of these conceptions. In Spengler and Fukuyama, both of whom were influenced by Nietzsche, there is a consciousness of tension between commitments to respect for the individual and commitments to the community. Fukuyama further grapples with the constraints which the norm of equality can place on that of individual freedom. However, it is Said who points most clearly to tensions and ambiguities between the liberal norms outlined above and the history and traditions of domination found in his own conception of the West. In this, liberal norms co-existed with those that legitimated imperialism, a co-existence facilitated by the spatial separation between the metropolitan West and its empire.

A further significant factor facilitating the co-existence of liberal and imperialist norms appears to be the assumption of a normative and civilisational hierarchy which is perhaps implicit in many of these conceptions. Bull and Watson, along with Said, suggest that the West increasingly saw itself as not only different from, but as more advanced than, non-Western peoples. For Said, the West's perception of itself as normatively superior also empowered it, helping to legitimate policies and attitudes of imperialism which are central to his conception of the West. However, the perception of Western normative superiority is not confined to readings of nineteenth century history. It is implicit in the work of Wight, for whom the norms which characterise Western constitutional government present a *via media* between the extremes of *realpolitik* and revolution; and in that of Huntington and of Fukuyama, for whom the West's victory over the communist system is one achieved in the moral as much as the material arena.

Therefore, in a number of these conceptions, norms both distinguish and empower the West through implying its superiority. Norms are further viewed as providing a platform for cohesion within the West. Wight and Bull suggest normative consensus was foundational to European international society, the institutional framework for the evolution of the West. It is clearly evident in Fukuyama's discussion of the moral and ideological evolution of the West in contrast to communism; but it is particularly well emphasised in Huntington's work. The importance which he attaches to norms as a source of Western cohesion is accentuated by his concern with the diminution of Western normative cohesion, a

threat emanating from sources such as unassimilated migrants and the advocates of multiculturalism.

Western norms are therefore perceived by all as a crucial element of the West's identity, and by some as suggesting the West is a more progressive and advanced civilisation. However, Western norms are not uniformly perceived as positive nor as providing the foundation for global norms. This is perhaps one of the more surprising findings from this survey, given the global expansion and promotion of Western political norms. Central to Huntington's argument is the perception that the norms and values of the West are what makes it unique, not universal. He, like Spengler and Toynbee, demonstrates scepticism about the possibility of transferring norms evolved in one cultural context to another in anything other than a superficial manner. Toynbee suggests the practice can have results which are both unpredictable and potentially damaging for the new host, weakening its own cohesion. These concerns stand in contrast to Fukuyama's more positive perspective which clearly suggests that the West has evolved norms which are universal, representing the moral progress of humanity as a whole, and to the international society authors who suggest that Western norms have achieved some measure of successful globalisation, providing a normative framework for modern world politics. At one level, Said clearly rejects the West as providing a universal and egalitarian world model. As with Spengler, Toynbee and Huntington, he is deeply suspicious that the projection of Western norms as universal is misleading. Yet at another level, he is committed to the norms of emancipation and enlightenment. However, these norms transcend the West and are not synonymous with it for Said, as is made clear by his argument that the West has failed to live up to these ideals due to its imperialist traditions.

Although essential normative qualities may be commonly identified across this range of perspectives, variations in their interpretations are significantly linked to perceptions of the West as a civilisational identity and to its perceived role in the cultural world order.

## *Institutions*

In its discussion of perceptions of institutions which characterise the West, this study has focused primarily on perceptions of political institutions. The international society authors in particular emphasise the role of institutions in both the West's evolution and in the constitution of its power. Institutions such as the sovereign state, international law, diplomacy and the balance of power are treated as structures and practices which distinguished the West, but also became vehicles for its internationalisation.

Most of the conceptions discussed focus on liberal institutions, such as constitutional and democratic institutions and those of the rule of law, as most characteristic of the West; but again, interpretations of their role and nature varies. For Fukuyama, Wight and Huntington, Western institutions imply a more advanced system of governance. In contrast, Spengler recognises that institutions of representative government characterise the West, but he treats these as symptomatic of the degeneration of leadership rather than as evidence of progress. He also recognises the state as the central institution of the West, but perceives it as an organic rather than constitutional entity. For Toynbee, the sovereign state and parliamentary democracy are central to the West's identity and success; but their value is treated as something transitory and there is a strong sense that, as parochial institutions in an increasingly interconnected world, they are becoming redundant and inhibiting future growth. Said also acknowledges the value placed by the West on liberal institutions of governance, but highlights that these co-existed with institutions of colonialism and imperialism which were equally important aspects of the West.

Most interesting are the concerns raised, particularly by Toynbee and then by Huntington, about the feasibility of the successful transfer of Western institutions to other civilisations. To Toynbee, the transfer of the modern Western state and parliamentary democracy have had a disastrous and divisive impact on non-Western societies. Fukuyama and Huntington find a rare point of agreement in their mutual respect for democracy, particularly as expressed through American institutions, as the form of government which best protects the rights of the individual, promotes economic growth, and enhances the prospects for

international peace. Yet both worry about the destabilising impact of the introduction of democracy to societies which have not evolved social structures which parallel the West's. However, they differ in their conclusions, with Huntington suggesting that the spread of democracy can accentuate conflict and encourage anti-Westernism rather than encourage global cultural homogeneity, while Fukuyama maintains his faith in democracy as a global model for political development. Their interpretation of the role in civilisational interaction of this core institution therefore varies in relation to their perception of the nature of the West's role in the broader cultural world order, an observation which can be made of the perception of Western institutions in all these conceptions.

Norms and institutions may, then, be perceived as empowering the West in its interaction with other civilisations. If culture is seen as forming a barrier between civilisations, as implied in Toynbee and Huntington, the transmission of norms and institutions is unlikely to be successful. However, as this does not mitigate the assumed superiority of Western norms, the West may remain ensconced in a position of superiority. If Western norms and institutions are seen as forming the basis of international society, as suggested by Wight and Bull, then the West is advantaged by having its cultural rules privileged since other societies must adjust to the West, not vice versa. But if these norms and institutions are untransmittable, they can still add to the sense of cohesion within the West by conjuring up the enemy without.

### *Conceptions of Boundaries: Continuities and Difference*

The boundaries perceived to define the West in these conceptions demonstrate interesting points of continuity and variation. The objective boundaries are variously interpreted, but each conception places importance on norms and values in defining their imagined communities. The norms perceived to characterise the West imbue the objective boundaries with meaning and are critical to framing perceptions of identity and hierarchy amongst civilisations.

Although the conceptions share a great deal in terms of basic perceptions of who the West is and how it has related to other peoples, they also differ substantially in their interpretation of the essential qualities which define the West, and the nature

of its interaction with the non-West. Such variation indicates the complexity and contingency in these conceptions, and the tensions which exist within this complexity. Key tensions include those between the norms and practices of the 'ideologies' of liberalism and imperialism which permitted both norms and practices of emancipation and domination by the West in its interaction with the non-West. It cannot be argued that the West is simply represented by one or other of these 'ideologies'; the development and unprecedented influence of the West which all of these authors acknowledge is premised on both.

### ***Perceptions of Interaction Between the West and Non-West***

Discussion of the norms and institutions perceived to characterise the West focuses attention on questions concerning the transferability of ideas between civilisations, an important aspect of civilisational interaction. The transfer of ideas is viewed by some as difficult and dangerous, but by others as a natural and positive process that enhances the growth of human community. These views relate to assumptions about the role of the West in the cultural world order, and of the nature of, and possibilities for, interaction.

### ***Cultural Power Politics***

All the authors conceptualise the relationship between the West and non-West within the context of Western dominance of inter-civilisational relations. The West is perceived as the pre-eminent power in world politics and an agent of significant global change. However, there are major variations in the interpretation of the relationship of West to non-West. For instance, both Spengler and Toynbee accredit the West's powerful position to its being the only civilisation in a stage of growth. Spengler views the West as having maintained a position of dominance, but not leadership, of a broader world order, whereas Fukuyama clearly views the West as achieving a position of leadership within a world order structured around the processes of modernisation and development. Whereas Spengler's world order is perhaps analogous to a forest of competing and co-existing but distinct organic civilisations, Fukuyama projects an image of a two-tiered world, with the West having completed the processes of ideological development which the rest of the

world is still struggling to attain. The international society authors represent the relationship as one of Western hegemony expressed and maintained through the norms and institutions of international society. Through this structure, other civilisations came to operate within the context of Western civilisation even when no longer directly dominated by Western powers. For Said, in contrast, the relationship is one of dominance and imperialism, the non-West always in some way subject to the West's influence or needs, but simultaneously providing the critical alter ego through which the West constructs itself.

As noted in our discussion of power, norms and institutions, imperialism is a critical feature of Said's conception of the West's relationship with the non-West. His interest in imperialism highlights the relative lack of attention paid to this phenomenon amongst the other conceptions considered. Imperialism is noted and accepted by Spengler, Toynbee and Huntington as an aspect of the West's expansion, although for Spengler, it represents an expression of civilisational decline. In contrast, Fukuyama treats it as symptomatic of a phase of development, perceiving the spread of Western ideas as a process whereby the world catches up with Western developments, rather than as processes of domination. Imperialism is more fully integrated into the conception of the West found in Bull, Watson, and some of Wight's work<sup>1</sup> as a relationship which conditioned interaction between the West and non-West. But it is only in Said that imperialism becomes the very core of the West's identity. Where the other authors perceive imperialism to be an aspect of the West's past, Said perceives it to be a relationship which conditioned its attitudes in the past and continues to do so. His concept of imperialism is not limited to the activities of nineteenth century European powers, but extends to the post-colonial period and incorporates the United States. The West is perceived as maintaining a strong cultural hegemony in post-colonial world politics. For Said, imperialism remains a defining element of the West's identity and of its relationship with the non-West.

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<sup>1</sup> See in particular Wight's essay 'The Theory of Mankind' (Wight, 1991).

## ***Interaction***

Just as we find differing interpretations of the nature of the West's relationship with the non-West, so we find varying interpretations of the impact of interaction; in particular, of Westernisation or modernisation. Spengler sees the absorption of modern Western ideas by non-Western peoples as essentially superficial, his perception of the cultural world order emphasising competition rather than cross-fertilisation between cultures; Toynbee views it as potentially disastrous, particularly in relation to the absorption by other civilisations of powerful Western ideas such as nationalism. Huntington, however, makes a careful distinction between modernisation and Westernisation. While acknowledging that the processes of modernisation were 'invented' in the West, he argues that modernisation does not necessarily mean Westernisation, and denies that modernisation will lead to cultural convergence. If anything, it exacerbates existing cultural differences. In marked contrast, Fukuyama views modernisation as leading to cultural homogenisation. He perceives the West as winning the battle with Soviet communism to direct the shape of modernity. Consequently, modernising trends will lead to the concepts or ideas found in the Western system with other modernising paths seen as either dead-ends or unable to deliver a universally acceptable culture.

## ***A Global Framework or False Premises?***

Perceptions of the nature of interaction and the impact of the West on other civilisations in each of these conceptions are framed by assumptions about the cultural world order. These also influence perceptions of the extent to which the West provides a model or framework of civilisation. Such suggestions are clearly rejected by Spengler, but supported by Fukuyama whose work implies that the West provides the pre-eminent theoretical model for political and economic development. Toynbee and the international society authors appear to provide a *via media* between perceptions of the West as universal or particular. Toynbee notes that the West has provided a framework for a global multicultural society, uniting the world at a political and economic level; but this appears to be primarily a technical framework since, as noted, he is sceptical of the secular West providing a

successful normative or institutional model for other civilisations and, at the cultural level, he suggests the West has exacerbated division rather than enhanced homogeneity. Wight and Bull also suggests the West provides a framework for interaction; but theirs is a normative and institutional framework, defined as that of international society. In fact, they suggest that the West has succeeded in uniting the world in a single, global political system. Wight's work demonstrates confidence in the framework of international society as durable. Bull, however, is clearly uncertain as to whether consensus on norms and institutions can be maintained indefinitely as the composition of international society broadens. But at another level, he appears optimistic that there is a link between the spread of Western ideas and the broader development of mankind. Huntington, in contrast, accepts that the West has provided an institutional framework for interaction in the form of the international system yet denies that this can be construed as a normative community, rejecting the existence of a global international society. For Said, the West provides not so much a framework for interaction, but a hierarchical framework of representations which shape and legitimise the policies of the West, and are deeply inculcated into Western and even non-Western cultures.

Deep divisions are evident amongst these conceptions as to whether the West is universal or unique. These do not simply divide early conceptions from later, or American from European perspectives, but create strange bed-fellows. For instance, both the liberal Fukuyama and the author of *Power Politics*, Martin Wight appear to share the conviction that the West provides a universally relevant model for political development, although Wight views this as a model for managing rather than eliminating conflicts in world politics. For the post-colonial critic Said, the conservative Huntington and the late-modern pessimist Spengler, there is a widespread but misleading perception of the West as a universal civilisation. All reject this 'false universalism' viewing it as a consequence of the West's extensive power which allowed it to exercise cultural hegemony. For Huntington, the belief that Western ideas are universal is misleading, provocative to other civilisations and, consequently, dangerous for the West. For Said, however, it is the danger to the non-West which is most evident, with the West's projection of false universalism forming one aspect of its power and dominance. In



some respects, this concern for the non-West brings Said and Toynbee closer in their perspectives.

By presenting a perspective which critically reviews the West's identity as constructed through its relations with the non-West, Said's work accentuates the Western-centricity of the other conceptions. Although all consider in varying depth the relationship of the West to the non-West, this is done primarily from the perspective of the Western interests and history. This is despite the fact that both Spengler and Toynbee were themselves highly critical of the Euro-centric focus of their own colleagues. Both challenged this by exploring the development of other civilisations, but both were themselves ultimately drawn to focus on the history and role of the West. Wight discusses non-Western political systems, but primarily with reference to Western-based models of international society. The interests of Huntington and Fukuyama clearly focus on the West, and within this, largely on American society. The possible exception to this Western-centric trend is the work of Bull and Watson, although they too appear most interested in the impact of the West and the Western system on non-Western people rather than canvassing the reverse.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Interaction and Cultural World Order***

The dissertation argues, therefore, that conceptions of the West are framed in terms of broader assumptions about the nature of cultural world order; and that conceptions of the cultural world order are in turn constituted in relation to assumptions about the role of the West. These assumptions have significant and differing implications for the way in which the possibilities for interaction in world politics are perceived. Huntington, for example, presents something close to a 'Hobbesian' image of a cultural world order comprising civilisational spheres of influence which confront one another in a struggle for power and security. Within such a context, the universalist normative aspiration of the West appear ludicrous and misguided, while policies of consolidation and self-defence appear sensible

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<sup>2</sup> Watson(1992) looks at other forms of international society from a slightly broader perspective than that of Martin Wight in *Systems of States*.

and desirable. Universalism at home and multiculturalism abroad characterises Huntington's prescriptions for the West.

In contrast, Fukuyama's cultural world order is one of different societies moving inexorably towards the perfect society, the model of which has been achieved in the ideas of the West. Interaction is shaped by levels of development, or progress in the 'civilising process'. His image of current world politics is a two-tiered one, with the prescriptions of power politics still applying to the less developed struggling through the processes of history, while relations amongst the post-historical societies appear peaceable and ordered. This suggests that the West should have a degree of pride in the achievements of its system and encourage the broader spread of Western norms, ideas and institutions.

Said provides us with a questioning attitude to approach the structures and institutions of contemporary world politics. This attitude implies that the cultural world order includes a multitude of cultures and civilisations, but that relations between them are shaped by inequalities in power. It probes the appearance of universality and of irreconcilable differences in order to understand the power structures which influence perceptions of self and other in world politics. However, the divisions which Said suggests exist between cultures and civilisations do not irretrievably divide them or ultimately undermine the common human identity which all people share at a deep normative level. Said's conception of the cultural world order, therefore, neither suggests the West as a universal civilisation, nor the irreconcilable fragmentation of humanity. However, it does suggest that significant inequalities between the West and non-West continue to exist in the post-colonial world.

This discussion of conceptions of the West has highlighted important points of continuity and difference, indicating that conceptions of the West are not monolithic but complex and contingent. This implies that the West as a civilisational identity and imagined community is dynamic; its identity shifting across context and era enabling it to retain relevance in diverse locations. Awareness of these qualities is crucial to any examination of the role of civilisational and cultural identities in world politics.

## *Implications for International Relations Theory*

This study commenced by observing the absence of reflection on civilisational identities and the West in particular in International Relations thought. It concludes by briefly considering what we gain by bringing such reflection into the discipline. The discussion of assumptions about civilisations suggests that these provide a perspective on human interaction which is broad in spatial and temporal scope. This perspective provides a sense of the historical context in which structures, institutions and ideas have developed. It enriches our understanding of the environment, agents and processes of international politics by adding considerations of culture to those of systems, structures and institutions of power and exchange. Therefore, the civilisational perspective provides a further dimension to the study of international relations.

The civilisational perspective does not necessarily undermine existing theories of International Relations, but it does suggest the limitations of particular theories by noting that these are embedded in the historical and intellectual contexts in which they evolved. International Relations theories are largely embedded in the context of Western civilisation. This is not to argue they have nothing to contribute to understanding interaction in the broader human community, but to note that the discipline often fails to reflect on the contingency of the models and assumptions which have shaped its understanding of world politics. Therefore, assumptions about culture, and in the case of International Relations theory, about the West in particular, often remain latent and unexamined.

This study has also sought to heighten our consciousness of the presence of civilisational identities in world politics; to acknowledge their complexity; and to analyse how assumptions about the West are interwoven with the theories of international relations and assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order found in these texts.

Recognition of a significant relationship between conceptions of civilisational identities and broader assumptions about the nature of the cultural world order is significant for studies of world politics. It suggests further consideration of the extent to which these conceptions and assumptions frame perceptions of the

possibilities for global political interaction. The dissertation suggests a variety of assumptions about the possibility for interaction can influence our analysis of world politics. Assumptions of incommensurability in relations between civilisations, as found in Huntington's analysis, could lead to policies of consolidation and homogenisation within broad cultural communities, and the pursuit of self-regarding rather than cosmopolitan policies and behaviour without. Conversely, assumptions of strong universalist tendencies in civilisational interaction, as found in Fukuyama's work, could lead to policies which accentuate and promote perceived commonalities or potential for these, but which perhaps disregard important areas of cultural, social and political difference.

A heightened awareness of the role of civilisational identities and their relationship to assumptions about world order may also raise consciousness of the degree to which notions of progress and hierarchy in global interaction have been absorbed from the histories and cultural traditions of our own civilisational identities. This study has focused on conceptions of the West and their relationship to assumptions about world order. The significance of this relationship is heightened by the West's status in modern world politics. However, the study's findings with regard to the complexity and contingency of civilisational identities and their relationship to assumptions about world order could be explored in relation to other cultures and identities in order to broaden our understanding of the ways in which conceptions of civilisations and cultures frame our perceptions of world politics.

## *Appendix*

### *The Concept of Civilisation*

A brief survey of the etymology of the term civilisation produces a variety of meanings. These entail intellectual, material, normative, developmental and cultural dimensions. Civilisations can be used in the singular sense, to imply a universal process; or in a pluralist sense, to refer to cultural collectives. Both usages remain current. The way in which the term is employed is significant in what it says about the cultural world order as conceived by the author.

Civilisation is a term which has evolved different meanings in different eras and disciplines. It draws its linguistic roots from the Latin *civil*, a term associated with courtesy; and *civis* a term associated with citification (Febvre, 1973; Haviland, 1994:253). The word entered European languages around 1766, apparently occurring first in French, soon after to be found in English. At its inception, it was associated with good conduct and with the maintenance of order in contrast to conditions of barbarism.<sup>1</sup> It was increasingly associated with the sense of material and moral progress innate to the Enlightenment, and subsequently with the concept of modernisation.

In the French context, Elias associates the evolution of 'civilisation' with the reforming and rationalist Physiocrat movement (1978:35-44). Here, 'civilisation' became an ideal which reflects the evolutionary and progressive spirit of the French revolution. This was the ideal of progress towards a unified, enlightened, prosperous and peaceable human society. In this context, civilisation entails qualities of universalism and progress (Febvre, 1973:230-8). However, Elias observes that as the French revolution proceeded into the nineteenth century, it became more moderate, more bourgeois. The concept of civilisation came to

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, John Stuart Mill's discussion of civilisation in the sense of it being the converse of 'savage life' (Mill, 1973:46).

epitomise the French national self-image and provided an underlying justification for French expansion. The 'consciousness of civilisation' became a consciousness of superiority which served to justify colonial conquest as a 'civilising mission' (Elias, 1978:50).

In the German context, however, Elias explored an intellectual tradition which effectively segregated the concepts of *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*. Here *Kultur*, seen to represent aesthetic and spiritual improvements of the mind, was elevated over *Zivilisation*, associated with a shallower, cosmopolitan tradition of manners (Elias, 1978). This trend was pursued in the Romantic movement in which the diversity of individual cultures was valued over the more abstract and less humane concept of a modern world civilisation. In this respect, the Romantic tradition as characterised by thinkers such as Herder rejected a unilinear, progressive conception of the history of humanity, emphasising instead the plurality of history and diversity of cultures.

By the nineteenth century, then, the concept of civilisation as universal and singular was under challenge from the German intellectual tradition, but also from intellectual forces unleashed by the Enlightenment itself. The humanist and scientific inquiries stimulated during the Enlightenment created new disciplines of thought, such as archaeology and ethnology, which expanded intellectual horizons, increasing awareness of the diversity and complexity of human societies and cultures. This instigated a debate between universalists and specialists on the nature of human society, leading to a pluralist conception of civilisations defined in the sense of a social order rather than as a progressive ideal (Febvre, 1973; Braudel, 1980; Williams, 1983; Springborg, 1993).

Therefore, an emergent distinction can be detected between *singular* concept of civilisation as a process, stemming from traditions which also produced the French revolution; and a *pluralist* sense of civilisation loosely related to the German Romantic tradition which stresses the individual qualities of distinct civilisations. During the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the pluralist notions laid increased emphasis on the development of specific qualities in a society. Civilisations came to be viewed as large, complex, largely urban, and having attained specific characteristics, variously defined as economic and occupational

specialisation, technological capacity, and intellectual skills such as writing (Robinson, 1969; Collingwood, 1992; Springborg, 1993).<sup>2</sup> These entail the notion of a civilisation as a large and developed culture.

The recognition of the plurality and diversity of cultures by anthropologists, ethnographers and sociologists, however, did not automatically lead to the broad acceptance of the equality of civilisations. In a sense, these new approaches established new hierarchies by subjecting other societies to the rigours, demands, scales and measurements of Western culture using Western standards as the norm. The nineteenth century appears to demonstrate a division between those who saw civilisation as a standard to which all cultures aspired,<sup>3</sup> and those who saw insurmountable distinctions based on colour or race, for instance, which instituted a hierarchy of cultures or civilisations.

Co-existing with the pluralist notion of civilisation was the normative concept that civilisation implied progress towards a superior form of society, a process which the West was commonly viewed as leading. This is implicit in the idea of a 'standard' of civilisation which emerged in Europe in the later nineteenth century. In general, the standard reflected characteristics, qualities and institutions which had emerged from the growth of the European states-system and reflected assumptions which had become implicit in relations between European states (Gong, 1984:36-8). The 'standard' defined the characteristics which distinguished a civilised state deserving the recognition as an equal by other members of international society. The 'standard' was intrinsic to the construction of international law and fundamental to defining the boundaries of modern international society (Keal, 1995; Gong, 1984). Although the standard was posited as universal, Gong(1984)and Keal(1995) argue the assumptions underlying it

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<sup>2</sup> Robinson's essay highlights the importance of the accumulation of knowledge and techniques of learning for building civilisations and of language for the development of the intellect: 'Without language civilisation could hardly even have begun and could certainly never attained its higher forms. Speech underlies thinking and conscious planning and research. It creates a world of ideas which interpenetrates and seems to transcend that of the facts of human experience'(1969:829).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, social evolutionists, such as Edward Tyler saw human development following a single, gradual, progressive pattern out of the natural state to that reached by European civilisation. This posited a psychic and genetic unity of mankind, implying civilisation is a learnt, social process (Stocking, 1968:173; Robinson, 1969:825-8).

derived from European culture and history. Its roots lay in European traditions which included the legacy of the missionary spirit of Christendom. This was manifested in the sense of 'the sacred trust of civilisation' and in the concept of the 'civilising mission'. This 'mission' entailed the sense that it was the duty and obligation of Europeans to bring enlightenment and progress to those still living in ignorance. In effect, the 'standard of civilisation' helped to rationalise colonialism and imperialism. Furthermore, the idea of a single standard implied, at one level, the existence of a singular civilisation. Assumptions about a clear standard of civilisation and the superiority of Western culture have waned under the pressures of twentieth century history.<sup>4</sup> The pluralist notion of civilisation has become more common, but has not always shed normative overtones, or the sense of process and progress implicit in the early concept.

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<sup>4</sup> Confidence in the West as a superior civilisation was undoubtedly challenged and shaken by a range of events, which included the destruction and violence of the two world wars and of the Holocaust.



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